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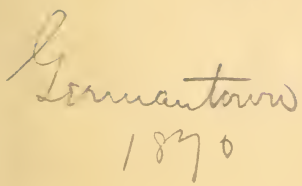

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PUBLIC WORSHIP:

The best methods of conducting it.

BY THE

REV. J. SPENCER PEARSALL,

AUTHOR OF "THE CONSTITUTION OF APOSTOLIC CHURCHES," ETC.

THIRD EDITION.

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PREFACE.

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THE following pages owe their origin to a paper read by the Author at Sheffield, October 10, 1866, before the assembly of the Congregational Union. The book, however, is more than an expansion of the paper, as new related topics have been introduced. The importance of the subject may be inferred from its selection by the Committee, and from the general opinion expressed that the discussion of it was, to quote the language of one of the delegates, "long due, if not over due."

The Author has viewed the subject of public worship in its relation to the present age, and in doing so, has asked some few questions, which he feels himself unable to answer, but which he hopes will elicit the enlightened judg-

ment of others. In adopting this plan, he has not departed from the spirit of the resolution passed at the last meeting of the Union, "That the cordial thanks of this assembly be presented to the Rev. J. S. Pearsall, for the valuable and suggestive paper now read; that he be requested to place it at the disposal of the Committee for publication; and that *the subject it embraces be now open to frank and full discussion.*"

The writer would prefer to address his work, not to ministers of long experience (although they, knowing the difficulty of the task, might be among the most charitable of his readers), but to younger men commencing their ministry, for to such the criticisms could not appear personal, but as intended to prevent rather than correct faults. He is led to expect encouragement from this class of readers by the kind reception which he met with some years since, when giving an address on public worship before the professors and students of a ministerial college.

Improvement in our public worship depends upon laymen, as well as upon ministers. The

contents of this book are therefore respectfully addressed to all office-bearers in the churches; to all, indeed, who take an active part in prayer-meetings and other public religious services, as, happily, pious laymen are wont to do in the present day.

Public worship, whilst expressing the grand distinctive truths of the Gospel, should be catholic in its spirit and promotive of union. It is, therefore, scarcely necessary to say that this book is not denominational.

Some of the strictures may seem to condemn him who has written them; but it is with authorship as with preaching, that if a man never taught until he came up to his own ideal, he would for ever remain a useless mute. The wish that ministerial life could be commenced anew, with its later-gathered experiences, is vain; better is the resolution to "set up way-marks" for the warning and encouragement of others who may follow.

THIRD EDITION.

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The Author is grateful to his Master for the hearty reception of his book by ministers and laymen of different denominations, and for instances of its usefulness. He is encouraged by knowing that the book has been read in the family, the college class-room, and at the prayer-meeting by the pastor; and that some ministers have commended by their example the practice of giving the volume a thorough perusal, and afterwards referring to it occasionally as a remembrancer.

Owing to the liberality of some influential laymen, several hundred copies have been presented to the ministerial colleges of different denominations in England, Scotland, and Wales.

The Author gratefully acknowledges letters of encouragement from the professors and students.

This new edition, including many additional paragraphs, is now respectfully submitted to the attention of the Churches, with the request that the Author may have their prayers for a blessing on his effort.

LONDON, 1869.

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PUBLIC WORSHIP.

Part I.

PUBLIC WORSHIP.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction.

"THAT no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way." Here is the key-note to the following dissertation, and our apology for free inquiry.

What, it may be asked, has prompted recent reforms in our Church architecture, but the conviction of a want of adaptation to the advanced state of society? The old meeting-house, when of ancient date, justly gives no offence; for it speaks of the historic past, and serves for a memorial that the wall was built "even in troublous times;" but for Nonconformists in the present day to select sites in the "lanes of

the city," and to erect mean buildings, would do violence to the æsthetics of religion, cause our principles to be misunderstood, and multiply stumbling-blocks in the way of men of education and taste. Dr. South sarcastically said, that if God had no need of men's learning, He assuredly had no need of men's ignorance; and we may say, if any Christian men do not care to gratify the eye, they should not make a virtue of offending it by a wilful violation of that law, according to which God made everything "that is pleasant to the sight."

While offering no opinion on the best style of architecture, we may remark that the structure should not be an imitation of the temple; that was symbolic, and, at the close of the ritualistic dispensation, was razed to the ground: not by accident, but by the wise providence of God. It stood only "until the time of reformation." What need, then, have we of altar and chancel, as if "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest?" We would rather learn a lesson from the simple structure of the synagogue and of the "upper room."

We would here utter a friendly warning to our readers who prefer the highly decorative, and who rely on the Fine Arts as the handmaid

of worship, and the great teacher of religion. A reviewer in one of our ablest Quarterlies, having remarked on the artistic epoch of Pagan Greece, proceeds to the artistic epoch of Christian Italy—to the history of Christian Art, which struggled through the Middle Ages with progressive power, until it attained its grand culmination at the Renaissance; and ably traces a progressive revolution, entirely analogous to that traceable in the case of Greek Art. In both cases, religion—a pressing sense of the power and proximity of God—supplies the occasion and the motive for the early efforts of art. In both cases these early efforts appeal, almost by accident, to emotions other than the religious emotions; casual beauties react upon the mind of the artist; the pleasure caused by them breeds in him the desire for more; and this desire for more—in other words, this love of beauty—takes its place as a separate motive alongside of the religious motive. For a time the two work together on equal terms: the artist is glad for his God's sake to endow Him with all the beauty and attractiveness that he can; and the new conceptions due to art give, in their turn, greater dignity, grace, and clearness to His worship. But the tendency of the artistic motive is con-

tinually to encroach upon the religious motive. The artist finds that by his art he is enabled to create a certain set of delightful effects of a distinctive and homogeneous kind, and such as he can produce by no other agency. These effects come to be the important thing for him; he pursues them for their own sake, and no longer for the sake of that which first gave rise to them."

"The implication that would attribute to the best epochs of art a character of superior public morality, has been much insisted on; but inexorable history says "No." There are two excellent things which the republics of ancient Greece and mediæval Italy compassed for themselves, and in virtue of which they deserve, as they have gained, the gratitude and passionate admiration of posterity—Beauty and Liberty. But they did not point a way to reconcile liberty with peace; neither was their beauty the beauty of holiness."

"Let us be preached to and taught; let our moral sense be stimulated, and our moral energies fortified by the philosopher, the minister of religion, or any other competent agent whatever—but not by the artist, whose one business it is to gladden and gratify us, without an after-

thought. The moralist and philosopher will ply their parts with more satisfactory consequences (let the Eclectic school of France be a warning in this matter), if they refuse to let the predilections of taste divert them from the single search for truth."

Without committing ourselves to all that is said in this review, we would allow the facts it records to guide our opinions. The experience derived from the history of Christian art ought to be invaluable to the Church in the present day.

But we pass from the material to the spiritual, from the building to the worship, and inquire whether our modes of public worship are altogether adapted to the present age,—whether it is "the offence of the Cross" or the offence of denominational traditions that makes our service distasteful to the undecided; and whether even devout men do not feel a want somewhere in the service.

This question is more important than that of architecture, and must not be silenced by the reply that a like complaint is made in other churches. Our wisdom is to find out wherein improvement may be suggested.

Is our error deficiency or excess? Must we

add or take away? learn or unlearn? Is our service simple, spiritual, and devotional? Is it natural, and free from the very appearance of cant? Does it lack power, impressiveness, and grandeur? Is it denominational and wanting Catholicity? Is it flexible, or conventional and stiff? Is any part vulgar, and likely to create, as Foster would say, "the aversion of men of taste to evangelical religion?" Does our worship go down deep into man's nature—far below mere accidental distinctions of rich and poor, learned and illiterate, and, like the Bible—the universal Book—does it find an echo in every breast, supplying what every true worshipper requires?

Questions like these are rising in the minds of thoughtful ministers and laymen, and must be examined. Necessity is laid upon us by the example of others. The subject of public worship is a "present truth."

Many Episcopalians complain of the neglect and slovenliness which have crept into their services, and are alive to the importance of making public worship a greater power. Shall we condemn their zeal, or uncharitably impugn their motives? or, instead of finding fault, seek to show them a better way? What we deplore

is their (as it appears to us) mistaken judgment. According to our notions of Christ's truth, many lose sight of the spirituality of religious worship, and resort to what is sensuous; their appeals to the senses intensify the feelings, but without reaching the heart and conscience; emotions thus excited are most delusive, and lead men, as at an oratorio, to suppose their affections are set on things above, when the next hour witnesses their sinful indulgence.

We ask, then, for no religious sentimentalism: no sensation service. It is easy to make some persons weep during our worship, but only like children, who cannot tell why they cry. Our worship must have intellect and heart. The true worshipper worships God in spirit and in truth, and has no confidence in mere forms.

Still, we must not be satisfied with a cold, meagre service,—one that appeals to the intellect or conscience, but leaves out the affections, or even the imagination. Worship is the homage given by our entire nature. Man is a harp, not of one, but of many strings, and all the chords of his spiritual nature must be touched and made to vibrate, if the music of the soul is to be felt and heard. What would be our surprise if the organist of a cathedral, through

ignorance or indolence, used only one stop of his magnificent instrument.

We must have our penitential confession—our cheerful thanksgiving—our lofty praise. We want not the worshippers to crawl like worms cleaving to the dust, nor to rise with broken pinions; but to soar into high heaven,—for devotion to have wings, not folded, but outspread for flight.

Our Service should realize the true meaning of *worship*, and the people should say one to another, not, "Come let us go and hear the preacher," but, "O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker: for He is our God, and we are the sheep of His pasture."

Should any readers prefer an elaborate ritualism to our simple mode of worship, and vindicate it by an appeal to the Tabernacle and Temple Service, we would remark, in addition to what we have already said, that probably very exaggerated views have been formed of its gorgeousness; and that the Jewish ritual was designed to be symbolic rather than æsthetic. It may be said, that although the service of the primitive Church of Christ was extremely simple, our Lord has left no prohibitions against our

adaptation of modes of worship to different nations and ages; and that the present elaborate ritual is but a natural development. To this we reply, that the silence of Scripture on many things now deemed essential, is extremely significant. Again, if the primitive Church service, with its two simple symbols, sufficed for a people trained in Jewish ritualism, surely it may suffice us, with all our light derived from the New Testament Scriptures. Nor let it be forgotten that ecclesiastical history warns us against departing from primitive simplicity when it records the fact that the Church at an early period imitated and even surpassed the splendour of the heathen temples.

We, in common with devout ritualists, are thankful for all that is truly helpful to our devotion, but we think that we honour God best by leaning more on His Word, and on the Holy Spirit to help our infirmities, and less on the externals of public worship.

If some readers think that we propose too plain a service, others possibly may suspect it is not plain enough. Such is the power of prejudice, that with some minds every proposed change is branded as an innovation. Yet if that word properly signify something new, then can-

dour demands that we first inquire whether it is an improvement or merely a novelty. Now, it will be found that what we would displace lacks true simplicity, and savours of ritualism; that it has only the authority of tradition, and is itself an innovation, which in time past crept into the Churches. The suggestions on this subject should not be rejected because at variance with denominational standards, but the inquiry should be impartially made, whether they are true to nature, and to the principles of the Word of God.

"The subject," says Dr. Angus, "has passed out of the domain of the merely æsthetical: it belongs to the spiritual and the moral. Let the truth be recognised and remembered by us all—that slovenly and disorderly worship is irreverence and sin, having this penalty among others, that it fosters ritualism, and does mischief at once in the meeting and in 'the Church.'"

CHAPTER II.

The Object of Worship.

"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands as though He needed anything, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." Whilst He taketh pleasure in them that draw nigh, and seeketh such to worship Him, the advantage is all on the side of the suppliant, who is favoured by the royal permission to approach the throne of his Sovereign.

The Creator stands in no need of men's worship, yet it is His due, and by the very perfection of His nature He cannot forego it; a truth forcibly illustrated by the duty of the earthly parent who cannot lawfully surrender his right to be honoured; a wise son would not wish him to do so. It is unnecessary to

argue this claim of the Creator, for it appeals to our consciousness, to a moral instinct in man which urges him to worship and bow down, to kneel before the Lord his Maker. It could also be shown that private worship does not suffice for man's wants any more than for God's honour, and that man, as a social being, cries to his fellow-man, "Let us exalt His name together."

In the devotions of some we detect the want of a definite object of worship. Now, it should never be forgotten that true worship derives its value from the character of the Being to whom it is addressed, and that the objective and subjective are inseparably related.

The representations of God given by some philosophers are not likely to call forth our affections, and make us adore Him. Many who do not regard God as an impersonal being, yet speak as if He were cold intellect—all mind, but no heart; they allow that "God is light," but forget that "God is love." "The metaphysical divinity of our schools," says Chalmers, "does not represent aright the character of Him who is our living Sovereign; who, all omniscient as He is, is not on that account devoid of most intense and energetic emotion;

but to whom the distinctions of morality are the objects of feeling, as well as of clear and unerring judgment; in that He not only knoweth, but loveth righteousness; in that He not only judgeth, but hateth iniquity. We would, therefore, keep by the scriptural rather than the scholastic representation of the Deity. When told, on the authority of Revelation, that God loves, that He resents, that He is jealous of His honour, that He is angry with the wicked every day, and longs for the repentance, and the return of His strayed children,—we would not for a merely theoretic object scrutinize into the mysteries of the Divine nature; but neither would we deaden the effect of expressions so distinct and literal as these by the metaphysics that would strip them of all application and all significancy whatever."

Admitting a limit of religious thought, let us not overlook "that which may be known of God." Without entering into the philosophical discussions of certain modern schools, we feel the force of the opinion of a great writer, that "language has no meaning for the words Just, Merciful, Benevolent, save that in which we predicate them of our fellow-creatures; and unless that is what we intend to express by them

we have no business to employ the words. If, in affirming them of God, we do not mean to affirm these very qualities, differing only as greater in degree, we are neither philosophically nor morally entitled to affirm them at all."

With many there is a craving for worship, but, losing sight of the spirituality of the Divine nature, or oppressed by the very thought of it, they seek for some sensible representation of God, and prefer a channel for devotion that shall be outward, visible, and tangible. Instead of knowing no temple more sacred than that of their own heart, they enshrine the Invisible in the works of their hands, and the mind is more readily affected by this appeal to the outward senses than by any reflections on God Himself, as revealed in the Scriptures; yet it is a religion of the imagination, mere sentimentalism—one of sense, absorbing the attention of the eye and the ear, whilst not reaching the innermost recesses of consciousness. That the worship of the Virgin Mother should have been revived is only one of the many proofs of the idolatrous tendency of the system. There has been a disposition in every age to offer prayer, not to the Creator directly, but to some demigod, or angel, or saint, who is regarded as having more sympathy with

them, and as a connecting link between themselves and God. This religious system may be the reaction from one that was cold, and hard, and unfeeling, and errs in the opposite direction, by giving to the creature what is due to the the Creator. It is true that in ritualistic communities many may be found who are devout and earnest in spite of their system; nevertheless, such worshippers need to be admonished that "God is a Spirit."

Ours is Christian worship, and we are thereby reminded of our superior advantages. The glory of God is not now veiled in a cloud, as it was in the Jewish Church, but is beheld in the face of His Son Jesus Christ; it is "God manifest in the flesh;" looking out of human eyes, speaking with a human voice, having human sympathies —the God-Man. However difficult it may be to understand this truth as a dogma, it commends itself to our religious consciousness. The Pagan worshipper, dissatisfied, has renounced his idol, and become the Gentile proselyte, and, together with the devout Jew, still feeling a want unmet, has become the Christian worshipper; but who has been found to reverse this order?

Luther struck a blow at Mariolatry by setting forth God in Christ, not as a fierce avenger, but

as "delighting in mercy," and having the tender heart of both a father and a mother—and thus calling up the warmest affections of the heart.

"God is light," and many may worship Him as such, but their devotion seems little better than that of a sun-worshipper. What is wanted is communion with a "living God"—heart answering to heart—reciprocation. Instead of supposing worship something on the side of the creature only—man speaking and God listening—man feeling, God impassive—man approaching and God standing still, the heart needs to appropriate the words, "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you;" "Call thou, and I will answer;" "The Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." Such was the experience of Chalmers, as we learn from those touching lines of his diary: "Make me sensible of real answers to actual requests, as evidences of an interchange between myself on earth and my Saviour in heaven."

Incautious expressions are often used respecting an "absent Saviour." It is true that He has passed into the heavens, and that His people are looking for "the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ;" but it is equally true that where two or three meet in His

name, there is He in the midst of them; and that there is a present as well as a future manifestation of the Lord Jesus. Instead of saying in our heart, "who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above," let us feel "surely God is in this place." A similar remark may be made on those prayers for the presence of the Holy Spirit, which in words imply that He does not, according to His promise, abide in the Church for ever.

A passing allusion may be made to a difficulty felt in prayer, by persons of speculative minds, respecting the Godhead. Instead of being satisfied with the silence of Scripture respecting the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, they are found "intruding into those things which they have not seen." Some ministers must be held responsible for much of this distraction; for not content with God's own descriptions of Himself, and the many beautiful titles under which He invites us to address Him, they unduly employ metaphysical phraseology; or, with a vain imagination, pervert the Apocalyptic symbols by scenic exhibitions of Christ presenting petitions to the Father. Let it be remembered that the Scriptures give no similitude of God, but simply employ hieroglyphics

to set forth His perfections, as in Ezekiel and Revelation.

The absence of any description of our Lord's personal features, except what is apocryphal, is most significant, and by no means favours the attempts of artists to portray Him. Spiritual worship has been rather hindered than aided by altar-pieces in the churches, however beautiful some of the paintings of our Lord's person may be as works of art.

Worshippers suffering from these and like distractions may be counselled to fix the mind more on the moral nature and relationships of God, and to aim at being "pure in heart;" our hope is in the Holy Spirit, who is willing to "help our infirmities." Through what avenues He enters the mind, or how He dictates prayer, we cannot tell; although we are conscious He does all this from the love and reverence that we feel glowing in our hearts. We hear no voice; we see no human eye; the communication is not fettered by words; through what medium the converse may be carried on is to us a mystery: perhaps it is not mediate, but direct. At such blissful moments there is not the hindrance we encounter in human intercourse; we seem to forget our eyes, our ears, our earthly

house altogether, to be as if we had left it for awhile. When the soul enjoys this higher type of worship, this third heaven of prayer, *then* it loses all distractions; and if afterwards asked, whether we were "in the body or out of the body," our reply is, "I cannot tell."

From the foregoing remarks, it will be seen that no altar to an unknown God will ever satisfy men's yearnings. The heart demands an object it can trust, love, look up to, and adore; and such feelings cannot be cherished towards one whose character and purposes are only matter of conjecture. The child is afraid of a stranger, especially of one that is unseen, or that speaks to it in the dark.

But since God has revealed Himself as love, let us approach with a sense of reconciliation and sonship; not with eyes cast down, but upturned, and looking into our Father's face. Some men's devotions are too exclusively introspective—they partake more of the character of soliloquy, of converse with self rather than with God; the soul communes with her sorrows, instead of with Him who is her "exceeding joy;" the face never shines, for it allows not the light of the excellent glory to fall upon it.

To prevent this excessively subjective state of

mind, let our worship be more outwardly contemplative, the soul looking upward, and with adoring gaze. Thus forgetting herself, she would be "lost and found in Him." Our worship would then have more of the *spirit* as well as language of *adoration*.

This chapter on the Object of Worship will not, it is hoped, be thought unnecessary. There is reason to fear that our Lord's rebuke, "Ye know not what ye worship," applies to many in our assemblies, who know little of the blessedness of the man whom God chooses and causes to approach unto Him, that he may dwell in His courts—who are never satisfied with the goodness of His house. Happy, then, are the people that can say, "But we know what we worship."

CHAPTER III.

The Minister conducting Religious Service.

The pattern of Christian worship is not the tabernacle or temple. We see not Aaron entering as God's high priest within the veil, whilst the people are standing without, waiting for the return of their intercessor, but Paul, the apostle and servant of Jesus Christ, calling the people "Brethren,"—saying, "Let *us* draw near"—minister and people,—*all* entering within the veil with the "common supplication,"—Paul kneeling down and praying "*with* them all."

Our churches have no part screened off as the chancel, for we believe that the entire church is a chancel, and that all the worshippers are "a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

This doctrine we defend as vital, and yet at times some seem to violate it—though it may be only in appearance. The minister may disclaim

all priestly assumption, and yet appear to the people to have a priestly presence; he may seem like one praying *for* the people, rather than *with* them, and to be conducting worship on their behalf, as if the offering of prayer and the sacrifice of praise might be vicarious. We sometimes hear of the minister "performing Divine worship."

Such an impression is baneful; the people do not care to join in the service; they feel the responsibility shifted, often attribute occult power to the minister, and trust to a false foundation. We need to beware that none of us fall into the error which we condemn in other communions; for the spirit of ritualism may prevail in a church that makes her boast of extemporary prayer and simple worship.

Let the leader of public worship study his own character, and carefully guard against all *personal obtrusiveness*. This self-assertion may arise from tones of voice, which, although suitable for preaching, are not sufficiently subdued and reverential for prayer; the key is not so lowered as to contrast prayer with preaching—speaking to God with speaking to men. It may appear also in artificial and violent gestures, unsuitable for a suppliant addressing a king; or it may be

owing to distress on the countenance which the people notice as soon as the minister says, "Let us pray;"—a dark cloud settling on his brow, as if he were afraid to approach his Father in heaven, or doubted whether he would be heard, or shared the dread, felt when Aaron went within the veil, "lest he die;" it may be only a passing cloud at the beginning of the supplication, and the face may soon recover its serenity, and even become radiant with the light of God's countenance; yet the first impression on the minds of his fellow-worshippers is depressing.

"The skill of the artist, and the perfection of his art," says Ruskin, "are never proved until both are forgotten. The artist has done nothing till he has concealed himself; the art is imperfect which is visible; the feelings are but feebly touched if they permit us to reason on the methods of their excitement. In the reading of a great poem, in the hearing of a noble oration, it is the subject of the writer, and not his skill; his passion, not his power, on which our minds are fixed. We see as he sees, but we see not him. We become part of him, feel with him, judge with him, behold with him; but we think of him as little as of ourselves. Do we think of Æschylus, while we wait on the silence of

Cassandra; or of Shakspeare, while we listen to the wailing of Lear? Not so. The power of the masters is shown by their self-annihilation. It is commensurate with the degree in which they themselves appear, not in their work. Every great writer may at once be known by his guiding the mind far from himself, to the beauty which is not of his creation, and the knowledge which is past finding out." This counsel addressed to the artist is equally valuable to the minster, who also may take a hint from Wilberforce, in his critique on the eloquence of Pitt and Canning,—"There was always this great difference; *you never forgot it was* Canning while he was speaking, but Pitt often made you forget the orator in his subject."

The public teacher, it may be said, is marked out from the people. That is true; yet it is the perfection of preaching to excite such deep interest in the sermon, that the people shall lose sight of the preacher. Should not, then, this spirit of self-obliviousness be cultivated especially in prayer—that minister and people may think of no one but God? The minister remembered at such a season is man standing between God and the congregation, and hiding Him from them.

He ought to be the *mouth* of the congregation. The people should hear a voice, but see no man.

Such was Dr. Chalmers: "There was in all his ways a certain beautiful unconsciousness of self, an outgoing of the whole nature that we see in children, who are by learned men said to be long ignorant of the Ego, blessed in many respects in their ignorance." The Rev. Robert Hall also was, as a prelate has rightly said, "calm, dignified, and composed; so little did one see of the man, that it appeared like the communication of ideas from one mind to another without any medium."

But how shall the leader of worship prevent all egoism, all seeming manifestation of the High Priest? Our reply is, error is expelled by the substitution of truth; self retires as another is introduced in its place; the human priesthood disappears only before One that is divine. Our aim, therefore, must be to make the congregation feel that the personal Christ is present in His official capacity, so that the eyes of all the worshippers shall be fastened on HIM. We must introduce "another priest," and stand, not in front of him, but *aside*, exclaiming, "Consider

the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." The way not to think of ourselves is to think only of Christ.

Dr. Ellicott, Bishop of Gloucester, referring to the Ritualism in the Church of England, says that "the present movement is one of reaction." Truly. The worship that divorces all priesthood is ill adapted to meet the wants of fallen nature, and men ignorant of the Lord Jesus will place false reliance on the minister. In vain we oppose altars and priests in our churches, unless we practically show in our Service that we have "an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle," and that "we have a high priest over the house of God."

Such was Paul's mode of reasoning with the Ritualists of his day. He would admit, as we do, that the worship could not be conducted without the presence of a priest, to receive the confession, grant the absolution, and pronounce the blessing; at the same time, he would protest that he was not that priest, but that he was sent to bear witness of Him who is "the High Priest of our profession."

Instead of eliminating from the phraseology of public prayer and song all allusions to sacrifice, let us rather learn a lesson from the apocalypse

of the heavenly worship. This we may do without violating a canon we have already laid down.

Our public worship will most honour the Lord Jesus, show forth the supernatural, meet the necessities of the worshippers, and remind the minister that he is a man "of like passions" with his people, when it prominently points to Jesus as "Priest upon His Throne," and does not dare "to doubt the full propriety of prayer to Him who sitteth at the right hand of the Father, Lord and King for ever." "In the name of Jesus, every knee should bow." Jesus only is "the Minister of the Sanctuary."

CHAPTER IV.

Public Prayer.

With many individuals, the preaching of Nonconformist ministers is much preferred to their public prayers. Does this arise from a prejudice against extemporary prayer?* If so, we cannot help it, for with all the alleged defects of such prayer, we cannot give it up altogether, nor retain it only as a supplement to a printed form; ecclesiastical history warns us that the surrender would tend to wither our Church life and usefulness. Many who prefer a liturgy yet feel the need of free prayer, and adopt it immediately before the sermon. The following language of the late Rev. Edward Bickersteth, Rector of Watton, is significant: "I would endeavour to press upon the heads of families, to seek the attainment of the blessed privilege of conducting

* See Part II. chapters i. and iv.

family devotions without being tied to a form, and with all the freedom of unbosoming our inward feelings and wants as children of God to our heavenly Parent, and ever-present Redeemer. Multiplication of forms cannot fully meet the vast variety of Providence, or comprehend the infinite fulness of Divine thoughts and pleadings given us in the Word of God for this blessed duty. What comes warm and direct from the heart, will also find its way more readily to the hearts of others."

Some of the common defects are indeed sad hindrances to public worship, and should not be overlooked; but might they not be prevented by adequate premeditation? *We want not less preparation for the sermon, but more preparation for the public prayer.* The preacher who rushes into the pulpit, and carelessly utters anything before his fellow-men, meets with merited rebuke: what censure, then, is too severe for the man who, undertaking to be the mouth of the congregation in prayer, is so rash as to "be hasty to utter anything before God?" Very few ministers in the present day would apply to the subject of preaching the passage of Scripture—"Take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what

ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." And shall we apply the passage to our public prayers? We speak not of special seasons, when in preaching and in prayer we may be denied a minute's preparation, for we believe it shall then be given us in that same hour what we shall speak.

The extent of preparation for public prayer we venture not to prescribe. Some ministers will, by devout meditation, seek the spirit of prayer; others will not only *feel*, but *think out*, the burden of their supplications; others will make brief notes; others will occasionally write out a prayer, not to be read, but as discipline for the mind in attaining and preserving the style of composition suitable for *public* prayer; all will, if true ministers, try to pray *from the heart*, and rely on the *promptings of the Spirit*. The objection sometimes raised to any preparation is the fear lest the prayer should smell of the study-lamp—the midnight oil; but our reply is, that when the lamp is well trimmed we do not smell the oil, but only see the light. Educated ministers admit that if they had more time to revise the sermon, it would be more simple and natural; and so it may be said of prayer.

Possibly, a wise preparation alike for prayer and sermon would be the appropriation of a part of Saturday, as follows:—

1. Reading the best devotional literature, including first-class biographies of ministers and laymen of the different sections of the Church.

2. Pastoral visiting is beneficial to the minister as well as to the people; for it is to him as walking the hospital is to the physician. Sometimes only one person can be visited, yet if his state of mind be well studied, more profit will be derived than from many flying visits. It would, however, be wise not to select a similar case every time, but to take a wider range, that life may be seen in its many phases. He, for instance, who in ministering to a mind diseased, thinks that all doubts are alike, will prove a miserable comforter to the doubter, and his preaching will lack that individualising which is the power of the pulpit. It is with the mind as with the body, that persons are "taken with divers diseases and torments." Such visiting will excite tenderness in the pulpit, which will manifest itself in genuine pathos. How can a man that has conversed with an anxious inquirer, or has come from the dying bed of a Christian

or an unbeliever, preach like a mere hireling? But the visitor will be thrice blessed as he returns home rejoicing that by a "good word" he has made a heavy heart glad.

3. It is sometimes well to say, as did Dr. Johnson and Charles Lamb, "Let us take a walk down Fleet-street"—that is, along some great thoroughfare of life,—that we may see the world, and study men. It may be wise at other seasons to leave the bustle of the city for the calm retreat, and go over some brook Kedron, into a garden, as Jesus did "ofttimes." The mind, as well as the body, would be freshened, and the morrow's sermon would be enlivened by illustrations taken, not from copies, but from originals. But to secure this, our walk must be for the purpose of meditation, and with the eyes of the understanding opened. How many gaze only with a vacant stare on the sublimest scenes; in whose minds the sunrise on the sea or over the mountains awakens no new idea. Not so with great preachers, who, like poets, see the charms of nature and are possessed with them. Like artists, we should carry our sketch-books, and draw our outlines on the spot, to be filled up in the study; outlines not only of the landscape, but also of groups of every-day

characters. Such a habit of observation would supply us with illustrations for our sermons, the value of which may be inferred from the style of our Saviour's teaching.

The minister who leads the public prayers of the sanctuary twice every Lord's day will need preparation, or he will soon lose living freshness; variety will give place to sameness; stock phrases and misquotations will be stereotyped; his own heart will become stiff and cold; and his congregation will begin to ask wherein is the superiority of the hasty unwritten form to that revised and printed in a book.

It is possible that a minister may lose in the vestry what he has gained in the study. The devotional temperature of his soul is suddenly lowered by some depressing word, and the public prayer, which depends for its power on calmness, suffers still more than the sermon. Let office-bearers, then, lock the door against intruders, and allow neither a word nor look that would distract. The most sensitive of all creatures is the minister immediately before and after service, and it is his sensitiveness that makes or unmakes him, according as it is or is not rightly directed and guarded; even Luther could never enter the pulpit without trembling.

We respectfully suggest, after long and happy experience, the plan of office-bearers uniting in prayer with their minister, and affectionately commending him to God, and to the Word of His grace, and then retiring from the vestry.

We lay great stress on this preparation; apart from it, all the suggestions in this book are of little avail. We shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon us; but to obtain this promise of the Father in its fuller manifestation, we must tarry alone with God in fervent prayer, until we are endued with power from on high. Our Father, who seeth in secret, will reward us openly, as our Gospel comes to the people not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. The brevity as well as distinctiveness in public prayer enforced in these pages makes a due preparation still more important. Some persons pray at considerable length, in order to give time for their whole nature to glow, and, possibly, towards the conclusion of their supplication a degree of heat may be felt; but would it not be more acceptable to God as well as man, if, instead of appearing before the people with such coldness, the "live coal" was on the lip, and its warmth shared by the people?

Let us in our retirement muse until the fire burns, and then let us go into the Sanctuary, and speak with our tongue. What freedom of utterance should we then find! Instead of having nothing to say, there would be the abundance of the heart, and we should be straitened until it was made known.

CHAPTER V.

Public Prayer—*continued.*

THERE are some public prayers in which the worshippers are conscious that they cannot easily join. Why, they are unable to say, for these very supplications have been devoutly presented to the Father, through Jesus Christ, by one Spirit. A careful analysis would probably supply the reason, by detecting some violations of the laws of mind, if not some departure from doctrinal truth. The skilful musician will study the peculiarity of his instrument, as well as that of the piece to be played; and so should the preacher acquaint himself, not only with the Truth, but also with the mental laws with which he has to do; ignorant of human nature, how can he expect to sweep the chords of the human heart, and to bring out its music, in the tone

either of sigh or of rapture. This principle applies to the minister when praying as well as preaching.

We do not lay down any conventional rules, nor ask conformity to any one model. The prayers in the Bible, like other utterances of inspired men, show great diversity. "The style is the man;" and the best remedy for errors *is higher cultivation of mind and heart.*

It may be well to point out some of the defects often noticed in public prayers. These may be of different magnitude, but all are departures from some truth or law, as those will admit who study the rationale of the subject. Some of our remarks may be applicable to private devotion, but we propose the following suggestions in reference especially to public prayer:—

1. Our public prayers ought to be addressed exclusively to God, and never to the congregation. "We are convinced," says a writer,* "that, oftener than not, the minister is deceived no less than the people, and imagines himself to be praying, when in reality he is delivering what may be called an *oblique sermon*—

* "Cautions for the Times."

when he is addressing himself, not to God, but to the congregation; and conveying to them, under the form of a prayer, the doctrines and sentiments, the exhortations and reproofs, which he wishes to impress on their minds. We believe that the greater part of those who have had the requisite experience in this matter can testify that, generally speaking, what is called the extemporary prayer in a congregation is both uttered and listened to much more as a sermon to the people than as a joint supplication to the Deity." Many prayers that do not come under this severe stricture, yet contain little bits of the didactic.

2. Our public prayers should be addressed to God as a living, personal Being, who is in our assemblies, not as merely overhearing, but listening with a view to answer. Some prayers seem to savour of pantheism, and to regard God as an impersonal being, or as a cold, heartless ruler, afar off. The prayer is often about God, but not direct to God. In the beautiful models of prayer recorded in the Bible we find the expressive words of address, "O Thou," "O Thou that hearest prayer," "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel," "Thou that

leadest Joseph like a flock; Thou that dwellest between the cherubim, shine forth," "Praise waiteth for *Thee*, O God in Zion; and unto *Thee* shall the vow be performed."

The direct address of petitions to God would concentrate our thoughts, draw them off from the creature, elevate the soul, and make us feel that we were in the presence of Him with whom we have to do. The Jews were reminded of this truth when, on their bended knees, they looked "towards Jerusalem"—the scene of the local manifestation of the universal God. Christians approaching the throne of grace need not turn to the East, but, with the eye of faith, look to their great High Priest, who has passed into the heavens,—in whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

It may be observed that, in the prayers of Scripture, the name of God is never mentioned as a mere expletive, nor repeated with the *frequency* that denotes undue familiarity. With pain we have heard reiterated the words—"O God," or similar expressions, as if only to give time to recall thought. We may mention the undesirableness of always addressing God by the same title, when so many suggestive appellations are found in the Scriptures.

3. The practice of telling God what He is, and what He has done, except these utterances be argumentative appeals, or ascriptions of praise, or the loving exclamations of a child's heart, seems little in harmony with prayer, which allows nothing unmeaning or unnecessary. We should also guard against complimenting the Deity, and patronizing Christianity, like the men that "did flatter Him with their mouth."

4. Ought not our public prayers to be definite in their aim? "Bathsheba bowed and did obeisance unto the king; and the king said, What wouldest thou?" Esther obtained favour in the sight of Ahasuerus; "Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? And what is thy request?" But what if these queens had come not prepared with their requests? And shall we "come into the King's presence, and stand before the King"—"the King of kings"—without knowing *what* is our request? As the voice of the congregation, ought we not to know what should be the common supplication?

5. Our public prayers ought to be logical in their arrangement. Yet does the suppliant never jumble together his thoughts, going backward and forward? An illogical order of ideas

and words is contrary to the laws of nature, and creates a jar in the minds of a congregation; it gives pain when listening to a sermon, but still more when in prayer we are required not only to listen, but to join in the petitions. Such jolting prayers cause much unrest in the mind. Public prayer may contain the best thoughts, but may be powerless from want of *arrangement*.

6. Should not the public prayer be progressive? We do not like to look always on a plain, even though it be well watered. We prefer occasionally to ascend a mountain, however rugged be its side. It is wearisome to hear a sermon that is one continuous level; and not less so is it with a prayer. We have sometimes marked the devout and earnest man, how he has gradually lifted up his heart, until a holy elevation has been felt; he rises "from glory to glory," and seems by his appearance to say, "Behold, I see the heavens opened."

Still, in *public* prayer something like restraint must be put upon our flights; it must be the minister and congregation rising simultaneously —all ascending the mount together—each helping the other upward. A minister may at times express himself in devout strains, far above the aspirations of his congregation, leav-

ing them below wondering. His prayer has been like some injudiciously selected hymn—more fit for the closet. It was well for Moses to be alone with God on the Mount, and for the people to remain at the base; but not so for the minister and congregation. There must be agreement and sympathy.

7. Public prayer should be marked by severe simplicity. We desire not anything commonplace, but the best thoughts, clothed in language transparent, and easily understood. A rhetorical passage or a fine word will interrupt the devotion of the people, and prove a stumbling-block in the ascent heavenward. This simplicity is violated by those who are fond of pomposity and mouthing.

When the right word is selected, the mind of the people will think only of the idea it conveys; it will be as the clearest glass, through which the beautiful landscape is seen beyond; the window, the medium of vision, itself being invisible. A great writer has said that the style for the pulpit is "dignified talk;" and the phrase well suggests the style for prayer, which is respectful speaking to God. This simple, universal language commends itself equally to the ignorant and the educated. Ought it not,

then, to be said that in his public prayers "the preacher sought to find out acceptable words?" A person thanking a minister for his prayers, remarked that he expressed her wants precisely, that his words translated her feelings better than any of her own, and at the same time quickened them. "How forcible are right words!"

The following extract from "Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine," written at the time of national grief, will be read with profit. "We must not usurp the preacher's office; yet not least remarkable among the signs of this time of mourning has been the leading paragraph of a political daily newspaper, closing with words of solemn intercessory prayer:

"'Almighty and most merciful God, who art the helper of all that put their trust in Thee, look, we beseech Thee, on the sadness and sorrow of our beloved Queen. Comfort and sustain her with Thy presence; be a light to her in darkness; bind up her broken heart; help her to cast all her care on Thee; and bring her again into Thy house with a song of thanksgiving, through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

"We heartily commend the prayer," says the writer, "as a model to our ecclesiastical authorities; its simple and earnest language

forms a remarkable contrast to those elaborate and unfortunate productions which are imposed upon the public by authority on such occasions."

8. Public prayer ought to be free from religious controversy, and from denominational nomenclature, from theological terms, once, if not now, signals for battle. It must be the devotional exercise in which the universal Church can unite. It is an interesting fact, that whilst Christians of different names may dissent from views expressed in the sermon, they generally agree in sincere and earnest prayer. The reason is, that prayer deals largely in the language of the affections, and that these are greatly alike in all Christians.

9. Public prayer should avoid explanations and declarations. We need not inform God. A theological student in Edinburgh, named John Brown, afterwards known as Dr. Brown, once introduced into his prayer the words, "That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, *that is, the devil.*" The venerable professor, Dr. Lawson, walking home from the hall with this student, wisely and kindly said to him, "John, my man, you need not have said, 'That is, the devil;' you might have made sure that God knew

whom you meant." Happy should we be to have such a kind counsellor who would tell us our faults in prayer; not, however, on the housetop, nor before all the people, but "*alone*."

10. Ought not public prayer to be addressed to God as Father and King? The suppliant should have the feeling of the child and of the subject; the freedom and loving confidence far removed from the legal, slavish spirit which pervades some prayers; and yet the reverence which prevents those familiar expressions, which savour of a glibness, or a talkativeness with God; for God allows us to speak to Him, but never to be talkative.

What a beautiful example of love and reverence our Saviour sets us in His prayers! Hear Him saying, "O righteous Father," "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth." If God's own Son thus reverently addresses His Father, shall *we* not say, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name?"

We may add that a like feeling should be cherished in addressing the Saviour. The luscious expressions found in some of the old hymn-books, and which used to be introduced into prayer, are happily obsolete. The familiar manner in which some pronounce the name of

Jesus is not likely to call up a reverential feeling in the congregation. The apostles never so spoke, either in their preaching, or when they bowed their knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Like Stephen, let us see Jesus on the right hand of God, and address Him as "Lord Jesus." "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow."

11. Public prayer might well contain allusions to passing events, and to the incidents of daily life. The requests of individuals or families for the prayers of the congregation should be encouraged. Such petitions, if brief and judicious, would be most acceptable. The congregation would feel that every man's wants were remembered, and that each one had an interest in the united supplications. The complaint would not be made that the minister knew nothing of real life, but seemed to be praying for persons that could not be dwellers upon earth. Nor would the congregation be gratified simply because their own necessities were remembered, but because their hearts were enlarged by sympathy as they joined in supplication for others; such social prayer would make the heart tender. Such petitions would have answers as memorable as some associated with the history of

Crosby Hall prayer-meetings. These answers should be made known by a public thanksgiving, for the honour of God and the confirmed faith of the congregation. We have ourselves been encouraged when we have been asked to join in supplication for a suffering individual or family, and on a future Sabbath have been asked to thank God that the public prayer of the many had been answered.

Our prayers, by their vague generalities, are at variance with the prayers in Scripture, and lose much power and tenderness. How minute is Solomon's prayer, "or if there be a caterpillar." Dr. Chalmers speaks of Doddridge's prayers as "*business-like*."

12. Public prayer ought to be free from all personalities. One illustration is suggested by the command, "I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and disputation." Another illustration is afforded when persons are referred to in prayer out of compliment, or from motives of worldly interest. Another, when the minister avails himself of the opportunity of prayer to tell the people something about himself:—a student was asked by a minister now deceased to preach for him, but preferred to be a hearer;

through the medium of the public prayer, the people were informed that the request had been made and declined; the student was himself struck with the indiscretion of a man usually strict in conducting public worship. Other instances belonging to this class of improprieties, and which may be regarded as taking liberties with God, might be added.

What shall we say to the practice of "praying at a person," and marking him out in the congregation, instead of telling him his fault alone? We have no wish that the pulpit should be a Mount Ebal, and that Amen should be put to the minister's curse.

Says a writer,* "Intercessory prayer forms a proper part of the public devotions of the Church. Yet, when an indiscreet man rises publicly to ask God to forgive other people's sins, there is great danger lest his prayer should degenerate, not now into an oblique sermon for the instruction of his hearers, but into oblique sarcasm or invective, designed to confute or to annoy those who differ from him in opinion. And the same effect may be produced even when the prayer appears in its form to include the officiating minister and his congregation;

* "Cautions for the Times."

for example, if he implore of God to forgive the sins of the *nation* in passing such and such laws—laws, perhaps, which he himself and the majority of his hearers disapproved, and had opposed." The writer adds a quotation from "Fraser's Magazine," in which there is mention of a popular American preacher, who, disapproving of a certain act of the Government, offered up the following public petition:—"O Lord, grant that we may not despise our rulers, and grant that they may not act so that we cannot help it."

Nonconformists are known to be loyal and patriotic; but it is well, especially in times of political excitement, carefully to select our words when praying for the nation. Need it be added, that every Sabbath intercession ought to be made "for kings and for all that are in authority;" and that a healthy influence is exerted by ministers praying for the magistrates and other authorities of their own town?

13. Ought not public prayer to be marked by brevity? Amplification is not needed, as the thought is supposed to be familiar, and the language that of emotion, which is easily understood. Compression will, moreover, impart a

charm, by giving vigour and freshness even to old thoughts. Every expletive damages.

Sometimes a prayer is spoken of as "very comprehensive," and therefore necessarily long. But do not some of these "comprehensive prayers," like some "comprehensive sermons," that are said to "exhaust the text," really show that the minister has never thought what he might wisely leave out, but only what he could introduce, whether relevant or otherwise? Were we sure of seeing the same congregation twice on the Sunday, the topics of prayer might be divided. But allowing that in every public prayer certain themes must be included, may not many petitions be *grouped* together in the fewest words? At one service more prominence may be given to one or two topics, and others only slightly alluded to. This plan would secure the benefit of variety as well as brevity.

At the prayer meetings during a recent great revival, the suppliants were asked not to exceed five minutes; but what memorable answers were returned to these short prayers! On the Continent, one of the converts made the beautiful remark, "Before our conversion we used to pray, as many do, in circles, but now we pray in straight lines." Strong feeling, unlike languid

emotion, seeks expression in fewest words, and gives directness to the petitions.

To the objection, sometimes raised, that we limit "the Holy One of Israel," we reply that the Holy Ghost Himself has said, "God is in Heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few." Reference might also be made to the prayer which our Lord taught his disciples, as a model of conciseness—the omission of all that is irrelevant. He who gave His disciples this short yet comprehensive prayer "went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." This however, was His private prayer, the other social or public; "OUR Father which art in heaven." Might not prayers be longer in the closet, and shorter in the pulpit? We want brevity and point.

14. We ought in public prayer to know when to leave off. It may seem to the reader almost a self-evident truth that no prayer should have more than one conclusion, and that if the suppliant has intimated, though in the faintest manner, that he is about to conclude, he ought to add no more. Who adds after-thoughts—these postscripts—in addresses to an earthly sovereign? Additions, even when they are not

the suggestions of worldly feelings, are always detrimental, and often excite irritation in the hearers.

Some minds will rise in devotional fervour, and take the people up an exceeding high mountain; but then, alas! they bring them down again to an exceeding low valley. Such is the power of sympathy, that when the minister begins to descend, the people descend with him; as his devotional temperament is lowered, they feel the chill. "The brother," as Whitfield said, "has prayed us into a good frame, and then has prayed us out of it." This may not always arise from undue length, but from distractions, to which every minister offering extemporary prayer is liable. Would it not be wise for a minister, when conscious that his heart has ceased to rise, immediately to conclude? Cessation of progress is the beginning of decline. The soul in its flight cannot resemble the bird long poised in mid-air, but will rapidly descend. Perseverance in public prayer, in the hope of ultimately gaining freedom, is most injurious to worship. "Groanings which cannot be uttered" are among the most powerful of private prayers; but how far "the Spirit itself maketh interces-

sion for us" in the pulpit, at such times, we do not venture to assert.

The modern custom of having several *short* prayers better enables the minister, when he feels himself embarrassed, quickly to conclude; he knows that another opportunity will be given to supply any omissions.

The best prayers, like the best sermons, give pre-intimations of a close, and do not keep the hearers in painful suspense. The loose thoughts and words in some addresses remind us of a heap of stones to which the labourer may be always adding; whilst in others, the skilful arrangement gives assurance of a finish, as much as do the layers of masonry in the pyramid. There is a delight in watching the building up of thought according to a plan, and knowing that the end of the prayer or of the sermon will be something not simply left off, but *completed*. Such addresses are generally the most simple and inartificial in structure, and supply another illustration of the truth already stated, that the excellency of public prayer depends, not on conformity to conventional rules, but on the discipline of the mind and heart.

15. Cannot public prayer be so constructed

mere formula, but with a sense of their profound meaning, as the added signature of the King's Son, of which the petitioner is graciously allowed to put the Father "in remembrance." A short pause preceding these words would show that the reference was to the entire prayer, and not only to the last petition. For a like reason the doxology added to the petitions in our Lord's prayer should also be preceded by a very brief pause.

CHAPTER VI.

Public Prayer—*continued.*

Prayer, whether divided or not, should have some mental classification of topics to be brought forward separately, or grouped together according to their affinity. Such a classification will be a help to the people, as well as to the minister.

CONFESSION

does not always occupy the prominent place it ought to hold in public devotions, whilst it sometimes lacks the right character. To pray to the Lord our God, and make our confession, so as to quicken and express the feeling of humiliation, is a work for which we often find ourselves painfully insufficient; sometimes the heart wants a deep sense of sin as "exceeding sinful," and the thoughts are vague, words cold,

and manner perfunctory. How worse than chilling will be the effect when that is the case. Nothing is more repulsive than to hear a preacher discussing the subject of sin as a mere controversialist, or dissecting a human heart with the *sangfroid* of a hospital anatomist, except it be for a man to make confession without any genuine expression of contrite feeling. How different has been the spectacle when a minister, in a devout frame of heart, has fallen on his knees, and spread out his hands to the Lord his God, saying—"O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to Thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our heads, and our trespass is grown up into the heavens." His subdued tones and feelings have melted the congregation, and have shown the power of genuine pathos to awaken sympathy. To make the people feel humbled in the confession, we must first feel deep humiliation ourselves.

There is sometimes an opposite error. The petitioner may suffer from severe encounters with the tempter, and have such self-disclosures that no language shall seem to him too strong to express his vileness. The diaries of many eminent saints will illustrate this remark. At

such times there is a temptation to use what seems exaggerated phraseology ; few of the congregation can respond to such confession ; and the unconverted are ready to ask wherein are the saints better than others. How difficult is it for a minister to conceal his conflicts and sorrows, or to make a private experience subserve a public benefit!

Sometimes from hasty, unguarded speech, certain evil practices are confessed, along with other sins, in a way implicating the whole congregation. Such indiscrimination produces annoyance, or becomes simply ludicrous, and, if often repeated, creates a suspicion that the suppliant does not *think* of what he is saying, or is wanting in a right sense of his solemn responsibility. Some are very fluent in speech—too fluent for penitential confession, which is generally slow, subdued, and usually broken in its utterances.

To avoid what is objectionable, the confession may occasionally be indirect, and blended with petition. Less difficulty will then be felt in alluding to certain sins. We may pray—"From fornication and all other deadly sins ; and from all the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil,—good Lord deliver us."

It need scarcely be said that confession should

be made in the spirit of a loving child who doubts not the father's forgiveness. It is made not before the Judgment, but the Mercy seat, and with the assurance—"Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious." Sometimes the petitions for the royal pardon which have accompanied confession have breathed the agonising spirit of the slave, and have been so worded and toned, as if our loving God were reluctant to show mercy.

Some persons speak as if the confession were made for the sake only of absolution, and not from the still higher motive implied in the words, "My son, give, I pray thee, GLORY to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto Him." Public confession may be repeated *after* forgiveness, as well as before, prompted by the unselfish, the noble desire, to tell the world, and even hell itself, that sin was entirely the fault of the creature, and pardon the free gift of the Creator. Thus viewed, the confession in our solemn assemblies is one of the sublimest parts of our worship—a part at which devils tremble, angels rejoice, and with which God Himself is well pleased. Were our hearts jealously alive to the honour of God, what a strong motive would this supply for joining in public

worship, of which confession forms an essential feature!

Whilst in the gatherings of the wicked God's character is libelled, and men excuse their sin by each one exclaiming, "I am tempted of God," the sanctuary will resound with the vindication of the Divine justice and holiness—"Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man." "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us confusion of faces . . . because we have sinned against Thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against Him."

Why does the worship of heaven consist so much in adoration of the holiness and justice of God, but because the holy angels remember how those who "kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation," have ever since misrepresented the Divine character? The Prophet Isaiah heard the Seraphim cry one unto another, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts." Ages after, the last surviving apostle listened to the same words, and tells us, "They rest not day and night, saying Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to

come." How heavenly our worship below has been when the Sanctus has been sung with more than usual solemnity, and the people have given "thanks at the remembrance of His holinses!" The place of the holy and that of the holiest of all have been separated by a very thin veil, that has but little dimmed the beatific vision, and the voice of harpers has been heard as distant music.

If the public confession be so important, let no pains be spared to make it most real. One means of preparing the intellect and heart for this service is the devout perusal of one or more of the penitential prayers of the Holy Scriptures, which for beauty of expression, deep pathos, fulness of meaning, conciseness, and living freshness, can never be surpassed. The confessions of Job, Ezra, Nehemiah, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and others, will recur to the reader.

The general confession may always be substantially the same, but reference to particular faults may frequently be varied.

In one of the "Tracts for the Times," an opinion is expressed that the prayers in the Book of Common Prayer are pitched in too low and plaintive a key; and the same fault is sometimes detected in extemporaneous devotions.

The confession should be plaintive, but remote from a desponding tone, whilst the public thanksgiving ought to rise to joy and gladness. Our wisdom, then, should be to find out the right key.

THE COMMON SUPPLICATION

is a division of prayer, under which may be arranged the ordinary wants of the congregation and of others. The profit of this part of prayer is not confined to its reflex influence; it is not only the relief of many a bosom unburdening itself, but *petitioning* a Benefactor with the expectation of an answer. "Requests" are made "known unto God," for ourselves and for all men.

This part of our public prayer should be, so to speak, our litany, and much might be suggested by the study of the well-known "Litany or General Supplication," whether we borrow the words or only the ideas. It is worthy of observation, that while the congregation is engaged in petitioning, there is a marked stillness in the assembly,—life is felt to be no fiction, but a reality; the heart expands as the wants of others are included; and deep sympathies are excited as the supplication goes up for some individual or family in distress. The trials and

wants peculiar to men of business should not be overlooked in our supplications.

THANKSGIVING

must also be remembered,—"Prayer and supplication with thanksgiving." We have a beautiful specimen of this devotional exercise in the well-known words—"Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we, Thine unworthy servants, give Thee most humble and hearty thanks for all Thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men. We bless Thee for our creation," &c. This is rightly termed "a general thanksgiving," and is important because not circumscribing the mercies of God, but implying that they are boundless, and cannot be reckoned up in order. We think, however, of particular, rather than of general mercies, and are most affected by singling out and enumerating them. What heart does not vibrate at the sound of those ancient words, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that

thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." Not only have we here the individualising and clustering of mercies, but also the intermingling of the temporal with the spiritual, just as in our Lord's Prayer we have the allusion to "our daily bread." Our thanksgivings, like our petitions and confessions, often do not descend sufficiently to the daily incidents of life; we need to look at truth from the people's standpoint, as well as from our own. We want more of the fellow-feeling of Christ, who knew what was in man, and who manifested His sympathies with the various experiences of men.

Public thanksgiving will be uttered in emotional language, in words that express much, suggest more, and assures us that there is something still beyond them; the grateful *exclamation* will often rise like a Geyser spring; there will be also the *allusive* style, which confines itself often to a sentence or even a word, but which serves to touch some secret spring in a man's heart. Many examples might be selected from the Scriptures, but the reader is referred only to one—the prayer of Nehemiah, in which, with the greatest brevity and pathos, the suppliant mentions "the name of Abraham," "the Red Sea," "the cloudy pillar," "bread from

heaven," "water for their thirst," "their clothes waxed not old," "and their feet swelled not," all which references had magic power. How difficult would some modern intercessors find it to present Nehemiah's thoughts in such few words; and what a temptation would be felt to explain all the historic allusions, and thus fritter away their charm!

Our thanksgivings would be enriched and vitalised by quotations from Scripture. Some of the pious *exclamations* found therein would reach the heart, provided they were prompted by the heart of the suppliant, and not used as set phrases.

Some bless God for His mercies, and praise Him for His gifts; but it is more correct to bless and praise Him for what He is, and thank Him for what He does.

Adoration will be found to blend with all parts of prayer, and therefore needs no distinct classification.

Our churches vary the order of the devotional service; some, beginning with confession, advance to intercession or thanksgiving; others unite these several parts in one prayer; and with many the order is varied according to

circumstances. Our chief concern should be that no plan should be permitted to degenerate into a mere form. The emotional parts of the service are the most difficult, and require the greatest attention and care, as they more especially depend for their acceptance on their adaptation to move the heart.

The order of the evening devotions may be different from that of the morning, and thus secure greater variety, and possibly increased suitability to the respective congregations. The contents of the chapters read, the subject of the morning's discourse, the missionary work of the church, the state of the unconverted, and passing events, will supply important topics for the prayers, each of which prayers must still have a distinctive character. A very short prayer immediately before the sermon may be profitably introduced.

PRAYERS ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS

should be definite. Before praying, we should ask ourselves, not wherein they resemble other prayers, but wherein they differ. The usual supplications, if not entirely omitted, should be grouped in the fewest suggestive sentences, and

these not allowed always to have the foreground. This plan may be difficult at first for some minds, that seldom leave their old ruts of thought and phraseology, and usually make a prayer special by tacking on a piece at the end, and making it heavier, as, *e.g.*, at a missionary prayer meeting, after the old, unabridged routine of words, the suppliant has "come round at last," when the people were exhausted, to the intercession for China, India, and other nations of the earth! Aware that the former edition of this work has been read by students for the ministry, and other young men, the author would respectfully suggest that, in early life, men should seek to acquire a versatility in prayer as well as in teaching—an aptness in easily turning the mind to the wants of the occasion.

Prayers on special occasions claim a suitable preparation. Alas! that any one should, without proper notice, be asked to offer up a prayer at any special meeting, such as the opening of a church, an ordination service, or a missionary anniversary. Such want of preparation often occasions vague generalities of thought, looseness of language, and hesitancy of utterance. There has been little mental basis, and, therefore, little to take hold on the mind of the

congregation. Prayer is not a dreamy sentimentalism, but the communion of intellect as well as of heart.

An opposite fault, arising not from over preparation, but from a false ideal of what is needed on these special occasions, is elaboration, a word often employed, not in its best sense, to denote something finished with care, but something *re*-produced in our pulpits with great labour, and therefore wanting simplicity. The educated detect in some of these special prayers an intellectual energizing, an unnatural strain, which destroys the repose of both speaker and hearers. Some of the finest specimens of public prayer have been those of great men, whose lofty thoughts have been surpassed only by a loftier elevation of feeling. Such sanctified intellects, after the most conscientious preparation, have not trusted to it, but to the Spirit, and have allowed the wind to blow where it listed. The public teacher knows that he has been most effective in his moments of *abandon*.

When there are several prayers in these services, the suppliant is honourably bound to limit his thoughts to his own part. In the opening of a church, no previous prayer ought to interfere with the distinctive features of the Dedication

Prayer :—" Now, therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name. All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee. For we are strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers ; our days on earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build Thee a house for Thine holy name, cometh of Thine hand, and is all Thine own." " Lift up your heads, O ye gates ; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors ; and the King of Glory shall come in."

A similar remark may be made respecting that part of the Ordination Service when the minister is commended to God in prayer.

The mischief of forestalling another in prayer, however unintentionally, is manifold ; and he whose mind is so ungovernable that he cannot avoid the error, ought to decline the public engagement. He who is forestalled has hastily to present a very different address to the Almighty ; or if he offers up the same petitions, only slightly altered, the service seems to be a vain repetition. The charm of having several prayers is the *distinctiveness of each ;* let this speciality be disregarded, and the multiplication is wearisome.

Whilst the best preachers are selected for special occasions, do the churches show the same care in the selection of those who are to lead the devotions? There is a diversity of gift in prayer, as well as in preaching, and the best preacher may not always be the best leader of the devotional service. Were attention given to this important subject, we should soon find who excelled in the gift; the churches would be edified by their utterances; and these special services would have a charm they seldom possess. Strangers would be favourably impressed with respect to free prayer, whilst ministers would often gain valuable hints, how to pray, as well as how to preach, and return home thankful for the suggestions they had received. On these occasions an opportunity is afforded of many exercising their gifts, instead of one only conducting the service. Such attention to the devotional part of these special services, as just alluded to, would help to introduce a new era in our public worship.

The question of the desirableness of all churches agreeing to adopt the same order of service is one we cannot discuss. In this volume principles are contended for rather than

rules, or the minuteness of a legal document. Life is manifested in its individuality and freedom, and the diversity of its outward development. It is the freedom in our worship which enables us to give it such expression as is required by modern thought, phraseology, and customs.

The author has entered somewhat minutely into the essentials of public prayer, in hope that the illustrations, taken chiefly from life, may so light up the failings and excellencies alluded to, that the reader may more effectually see them, and candidly admit their truthfulness.

If our standard of public prayer seem too high, our reply is, that reflection and longer experience will probably reverse such a judgment. Instead of feeling satisfaction with a lower level, the ideal of prayer will be higher and higher, and grief often felt that it has not been reached. The responsibility of expressing before God the people's wants will appear equally great, if not greater, than that of expounding the Scriptures. Such is the admission which many ministers have made to the author.

If asked for an example of a minister pre-eminently gifted in prayer, we would refer to

the portraiture of the Rev. Thomas Toller, drawn by Robert Hall, who writes: "It would be great injustice to the memory of my invaluable friend, while speaking of his ministerial qualifications, not to mention his striking superiority in the discharge of the devotional part of his public functions, his almost unrivalled eminence in prayer. His addresses to the Supreme Being united every excellence of which they are susceptible; they were copious, without being redundant, fervent without extravagance, elevated, without the least appearance of turgidity or pomp. He poured out his whole soul in an easy, unaffected flow of devotional sentiment; adoration seemed to be his natural element; and, as he appeared to lose all consciousness of any other presence but that of the Deity, he seldom failed to raise his audience to the same elevation, to make them realize the feeling of Jacob, when he exclaimed, 'How awful is this place!'"

CHAPTER VII.

The Public Reading of the Scriptures.

The Jewish Church gave prominence in their synagogues to the reading of the Old Testament. "Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath-day." The nation heard "the voices of the prophets, which were read every Sabbath-day." Jesus "went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, and stood up for to read."

"It is doubtful," says Dean Alford, alluding to our Lord reading in the synagogue at Nazareth, "whether the Rabbinical cycle of Sabbath readings, or lessons from the Law and prophets, were yet in use; but some regular plan was adopted; and, according to that plan, after the reading of the Law, which always preceded, the portion from the prophets came to be read, which for that Sabbath fell in the Prophet Isaiah."

The Apostle Paul writes to the Church at Colosse: "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea." Writing to the Church in Thessalonica, the same apostle says, "I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren"—to all the Church.

Justin Martyr observes: "On the day called Sunday, there is made a gathering into the same place of all that live in city or country, and the memoranda of the apostles, or the writings of the prophets, are read as long as may be."

"He that read the Scriptures," says Lord King, "was particularly destinated to this office as a preparative to Holy Orders. The name by which this officer was distinguished was, in Latin, *lector*, which signifies in English a reader, or, as we now call him, a clerk. The place from whence the clerk read was an eminency erected in the church, so that all the people might see him, which was called *pulpitum*, or a pulpit, from which pulpit he read the Scriptures alone, and not others alternately with him, it being his office only to read, whilst the congregation listened to him. How much the lector read at a time is uncertain, since they varied according to the

circumstances of their condition. So writes Tertullian, that they read the Scriptures according to the quality of their present times."

Some ministers feel a difficulty in selecting the lessons for the service, and invite suggestions. Shall we read consecutively, omitting such portions as are less suitable? Shall the sermon and passing events determine the choice? Shall we try to reach many minds by reading every Sunday the historic and poetic, as well as the doctrinal and preceptive parts? Shall we every Sunday have the Psalm, the Gospel, and the Epistle? Shall we classify the readings into biography, history, parables, miracles, &c.? Shall we disregard the division of chapters, and adopt the plan of the Paragraph Bible? Would it be useful for our churches to agree as to the lessons for the year, and for a printed calendar to mark, not only the Sabbath, but also the daily readings, in which families at home might share the benefit? This last plan might apply to some of the lessons, the others being left to the suggestions of passing events.

On a review of ministerial life, it is painful to remember how many portions of Scripture have been omitted, the public reading of which would have awakened in the congregation the surprise

of a discovery, and have deepened the profitable conviction of the inexhaustibleness of the Bible. Possibly some ministers register not only the hymns sung, but also the chapters read during the year, to prevent the frequent selection of favourite portions.

Our hearers do not always listen so attentively to the reading as to the sermon. Yet the reading of the Bible is the Royal Proclamation, the King's message; the reader saying, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." The people are summoned to listen to One "that speaketh from heaven," with the Father's command, "Hear ye Him."

The reverence of the hearers will bear some proportion to the reverence of the reader. We want not bibliolatry; yet a devout man will evince, by his tones and by the very handling of the Bible, that he deems it not a common book. How suggestive is the record,—Ezra "opened the book in the sight of all the people; for he was above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up." What reverence the Messiah, the King's Son, showed, when, according to the Jewish custom, He "went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day and *stood up*

for to *read.*" When He closed the book and began to teach, He "*sat down.*"

We believe that God honours His own word; of this we have proof when in the sermon a quotation from Scripture is often "the King's arrow." But do we, as often as might be expected, hear of conversions, or of great spiritual edification, from the public reading? Why not? Is it owing to the manner of our reading? Or, to the congregation not expecting a blessing on this part of service? Or, to the want of special petition for God's Spirit to accompany the reading as well as the preaching?

It may be with the reading of the Scriptures, as with the sermon, that there are many instances of usefulness never made known. It is said of the late Dr. McAll, of Manchester, who excelled as a reader: "The subject of always reading the Scriptures in all religious services was mentioned, to which he gave his most decided approbation, and remarked that, during his ministry at Macclesfield, it had come to his knowledge that some of the most powerful impressions which had been made on the hearts of his hearers had been wrought by the simple reading of the Word of God. After a solemn pause, he added: 'If the Lord had appointed

two officers in His church, the one to preach the Gospel, and the other to read the Scriptures, and had given me the choice of these, I should have chosen to be a reader of the inspired Word of Jehovah.'"

We encourage the use, not only of the pulpit, but also of the *pew* Bible, yet would urge all, not only to read, but to *listen* to the reading of the minister. If the eye and ear cannot both, simultaneously, take in the truth, let the *ear* at this time be the open avenue; we can use the eye at home. There is not only the word-painting, but the word-music of Holy Scripture, that from the lips of a good reader falls on the ears of the congregation like the sweetest chimes. There is a power in the *sound* of words that brings out the meaning, and the shades of meaning, that cannot otherwise be expressed. We might add, that this is one of the many arguments for the public reading of the Scriptures.

However well a minister may read the Scriptures, it will be wise for him to read over the lessons at home, that his heart may imbibe the *spirit* of them, and his imagination take hold of the descriptive scenes. Good reading depends on right feeling—sympathy with the theme. We should like to have heard Ezekiel, with his

"pleasant voice," read aloud his own imagery of the Cherubim and the wheels. Even to unrenewed ears he was "as a very lovely song." How much greater the privilege to have heard the Saviour himself when He "stood up for to read!" Doubtless, all "bare Him witness and wondered," as His mind and voice brought out the hidden meanings of Scripture. No one, not even Isaiah himself, ever read the prophecy of Isaiah, as did the Messiah. All He did was perfect. In everything was He our example. Never man *read* like this man.

Too much importance cannot be attached to the public reading of the Scriptures. Although happily we do not live in the day when the Word of God was unpublished in "our own tongue wherein we were born," or when its costliness was too great to allow it to be a family possession, when few could read, when persecution hindered the perusal, when groups of inquirers stood around the "Great Bible," chained to a pillar at St. Paul's Cross, anxiously listening to the reader; yet do we not live in a day when the Bible, owing to the misrepresentation of false witnesses, is only partially believed by millions "willingly ignorant?" Whilst,

therefore, we appreciate learned defences of the inspiration of the Bible, and of other doctrines of Christianity, we feel that, could we get the multitude into our churches to hear the Scriptures read, this would be the simplest and surest method of convincing the intellect and the conscience. Many will read Renan and other opponents, but not the book itself that is attacked; hence the success of the calumniator. The Bible fears nothing but concealment. It is its own witness. To those who speak disparagingly of its Divine Author, our reply is, Have you ever read the authentic memoir of His life, as found in "the record that God gave of his Son?" We live in a day when, too, owing to the high priests of ritualism, many take their doctrine from the church, and when the spirit of Romanism threatens to set aside the Bible. Without the reading of the Scriptures, public service would soon become monotonous, the most original preacher could not prevent it; and this would be owing, not to fixed truth, but to the sameness of the forms in which it was so often conveyed by the human teacher. But who complains of wearisome sameness in the Bible? The following testimony of one of the natives of the Khasich hills of India is not alone:—"The

Word of God is wonderful, for I have some new thought every time I look into it. I do not find it so with anything else; but the Word of God is like a fountain which sends forth waters every day. They are not the same; but though they differ, they are all very good. Even the same verse says something new whenever I look into it."

This constant freshness is felt by the congregation, and is the more remarkable when we remember that we are listening to a translation. "Singular to tell," says Maculloch, "the Bible is the easiest of all books to translate, and, in every tongue into which it is rendered, the easiest to read; while it is, over and above, the fullest of life and vivacity. The beauties and delicate touches of other books decline to be transferred into a foreign tongue, and die under the process; but the vitality of the Scriptures passes immortal, like the transmigrating spirit from one body to another. Other works of genius are like the diamond, which, though beautiful as long as its original structure is preserved, turns, the moment that structure is changed, into a mere piece of charcoal. The Bible resembles the fabled Phœnix, which always rises again fresh and

beautiful from its ashes." Wonderful book! Although written in ages past, it is fresher than all "modern thought," and seems as if it had been written expressly for the men of this generation.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Public Teaching of the Sanctuary.

Our message from God is committed to us in writing, and bears the King's seal. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." We are men of one Book; and the charge we have received from the Lord is, that we renounce "the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." We do not claim to be infallible interpreters, nor to take upon ourselves the responsibility of other men's beliefs; but urge our fellow-men rather to search the Scriptures for themselves with us, "whether these things are so."

Although "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," each of them had his own style of address. God is pleased now also to bless various modes of teaching to His church and to the world. We dwell not on this thought, but simply ask whether the best form of teaching in the pulpit is a sermon or an exposition. Probably many will prefer a very brief exposition of one of the lessons, and also a sermon which shall be suggestive—but short, omitting all that is irrelevant, and that would subtract from its usefulness.

We would suggest that only one of the lessons be explained, so that the people may always hear a portion of God's Word without the possibility of God's thoughts being concealed by men's words, or perverted by men's opinions. Moreover, such reading, however valuable the exposition, would testify to our confidence in the power of the Bible as self-interpreting, and that God is His own interpreter.

When reading the chapter, it would be wise to correct any grammatical errors in the translation. By rendering certain passages into our modern idiom, we should give the fulness of the meaning,

and be able to read in public many portions of Scripture now passed over. Nearly three hundred words have become obsolete, others have now a different signification, and others do not give the nice shade of meaning; for these, other words might be substituted without any appearance of pedantry. The importance of explaining words is forcibly expressed by Archbishop Trench, when he says: "The words of the New Testament are generally the στοιχεῖα of Christian theology, and he who will not begin with a patient study of those shall never make any considerable, least of all any secure, advances in this; for here, as everywhere else, sure disappointment awaits him who thinks to possess the whole without first possessing the parts of which that whole is composed."

The language of Lord Bacon well sets forth the exposition desired by our churches: "We want short, sound, and judicious notes upon Scripture, without running into commonplaces, pursuing controversies, or reducing those notes to artificial method, but leaving them quite loose and native. For, certainly, as those wines which flow from the first treading of the grapes are sweeter and better than those forced out by the press, which gives them the rough-

ness of the husk and stone, so are those doctrines best and sweetest which flow from a gentle crush of the Scriptures, and are not wrung into controversies and commonplaces." There must be a difference between the style of the Pulpit and that of the Theological Hall.

What preaching is best adapted to meet the errors of the day is a large question. We may, however, remark, that whilst the occasional controversial discourse is useful, the prevailing style should be didactic, which clearly states the truth and exposes error by way of corollary. All error is the perversion of a truth, and the way to displace error is to present the truth. It is better, generally, to present the truth affirmatively, rather than negatively; to say what is truth, rather than what is not; or, if we give the negative, to add the affirmative.

The preaching which is sentimental, and is satisfied with awakening feeling, will never fortify the hearer against Romanism or any other error. We must be instructive as well as emotional. We do not, however, discourage all appeals to the feelings; for the finest specimens of pathos are found in the language of prophets

and apostles—pathos excelled only by the Great Teacher himself. But it will be found that the power of their persuasive appeals lay in the truth presented, and that the way was prepared by an address to the understanding. Moreover, the strong feeling was excited, not for its own sake, but as a means to accomplish some practical purpose. It may further be said, that there was no effort to get up a sensation. The sudden appeal, often sublimely abrupt, was the outburst of pent-up passion. Such genuine pathos will ever excite the purest emotion in the hearer. Like fire, it will spread.

Nor is it enough that our preaching be Scriptural; it must be also full of Scripture. The preacher must not merely bring his sermon to be assayed by its infallible standard, but must bring it directly *out* of the Bible, as the precious silver out of the mine. So did the apostles, and the Great Teacher himself, who, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, represented unto them the things concerning Himself." The preaching which honours Scripture will be honoured by God.

We lay great stress on the right selection of texts. It is no dishonour to Scripture to say that some passages are more striking and

suggestive than are others, and will, if rightly explained, never be forgotten. A well-known poet, sitting in judgment on modern poets, complains of the undue attention paid to subjects of trivial importance. "Now, I do not deny," he says, "that the poetic faculty can, and does manifest itself in treating the most trifling action, the most hopeless subject; but it is a pity that power should be wasted, and that the poet should be compelled to impart interest and force to his subject instead of receiving them from it, and thereby doubling his impressiveness." We may add the remark, that just as our ministry is characterized by "the preaching of the Cross," will it dwell on a theme remote from the trivial.

Sermons would be more instructive if the subjects, instead of being isolated, were connected. Although no announcement were made of courses of sermons, the people would feel that they were the links of related truths.

Our Lord in His teaching quickened men's consciences, and appealed to their fears as well as to their hopes, by reminding them of judgment to come. So did His apostles. And no preaching can be effective that does not awaken the conscience to a sense of moral obligation to

the Creator, and also of its guilty disobedience. It is this which humbles the sinner, and prepares him to accept God's method of mercy. The atonement is then seen in a different light, and is felt to meet our necessities. But some teachers succeed thus far, but seem unable to guide into the way of peace the conscience which they themselves have troubled. Like the woman of Endor, they are alarmed and paralyzed at their own works. Our duty is, with the aid of God's Spirit, to direct and comfort the anxious inquirer.

The ultimate aim of the ministry is not conversion, nor peace of mind, but the development and perfection of Christian character—the attainment of the perfect man—"the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," "whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

In this work we speak of preaching in its relation to worship. Although not strictly a part of worship, yet it ought to lead directly to it. God's truth, the truth in Jesus, coming down from heaven into the heart, will re-ascend in thanksgiving and praise; the response of the heart will be worship. The ultimate object of

a sermon is not the belief of a creed, but belief leading to the worship of God in holy thoughts, affections, and actions. Nor is this mere theory. Such is still the power of preaching Christ, that if "there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." The power of a sermon to awaken or deepen a devout reverence for God is often observed in the response of the congregation in the song of praise that immediately follows, or in the intensified stillness at the close of the service, when the people bend the knee and adore the God of truth, silently proclaiming, "There is nothing great but God."

The preacher should appeal to man's entire nature, so that God may have the homage of every faculty. Alas! that ever the very deficiency of a sermon should pass for a virtue—that the address should be called "intellectual," because the conscience and affections were disregarded in an appeal to the intellect alone! Such an epithet was not applied to the words of the Great Teacher, although "never man spake like this man."

To secure this worship, we must speak not only about the works of God, but about God himself—"to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." This was Paul's method when, beholding the devotions of the Athenians, he "found an altar with this inscription, To the unknown God. Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." Our Lord, also, as he talked to the woman of Samaria, told her, "Ye worship ye know not what," and then revealed to her wondering mind the memorable truth—"God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

How solemn is the thought that Satan, through false teachers, is showing men all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and saying unto each, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Men have "worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator who is blessed for ever." If false prophets are so earnest in making men devotees of Baal, shall not we earnestly seek God's Spirit, that by our preaching, men may turn "from idols to serve the living and true God?"

It will be seen from these remarks that our plea for higher worship does not suppose that we attach less importance to the sermon than did our forefathers. We want preaching to be a *greater power*, by the churches attaching more importance to the sanctuary as "the house of prayer." The preacher will have power with the unconverted in proportion as the people have power with God, and prevail. To what extent do our churches look for answers to the public prayers? Do they hear the sermon with the confidence that the Gospel will come to the congregation "not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance?"

The value of the devotional part of the service, when *rightly* conducted, will be seen in its making the mind receptive; for surely after prayer and praise, the heart ought to be more sensitive and disposed to yield to the love of God. A wise preacher will avail himself of this help, and will not allow the people to be jaded, mentally and bodily, before the sermon is commenced,—nor to be diverted by any unsuitable notices. He will also take care that the hymn and tune shall calm his own mind and that of his hearers, and

thus better enable them to hear God's voice. Elisha, probably discomposed by the wickedness of Ahab's family and others, says, "But now bring me a minstrel; and it came to pass when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him;" and, as the minstrel sang and played, the song and the music restored the calm, and prepared his mind for the heavenly communication. Alas! how often in days past, the tune has excited irritability, instead of allaying it.

A contributor to the *Cornhill Magazine* writes:—"Pitt observed that eloquence is not in the speaker, but in the audience. . . I believe that this truth is entirely forgotten. There are always two factors in the production of eloquence. An audience is a thing to be played upon, an instrument that requires tuning. If the audience is in tune, a very ordinary speaker will appear as the most eloquent of living men; if out of tune, the eloquence of Goldenmouth himself will appear as the tinkling cymbal and the sounding brass." If, then, we would be profited by the sermon, let not the devotional part of the service be neglected.

The signs of the times remind us that necessity is laid upon us to preach the Gospel. "The

apostles went forth and preached everywhere." "Christ sent me," said Paul, "not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel." The history of the Reformation in this country and on the Continent is identified with preaching, and any surrender of this precious gift would invite the return of the dark ages. "That we behold the light," says Bishop Jewel, "that we have escaped out of bondage, that we are accounted, and be the sons of God; all that, I say, we owe unto the preaching of the Word of God. Let us not deceive ourselves, brethren; let us not deceive ourselves; matters are not so firmly established that they cannot fall. A lamp, except you put oil in it, will soon be out; the victory is kept by such means as it is gotten." "By preaching," says Jeremy Taylor, "the apostles planted the church, and the primitive bishops supported the faith of martyrs, and the hardiness of confessors, and the austerity of the retired. By this they confounded heretics and evil livers, and taught them the ways of the Spirit." Let each minister, then, say with Chrysostom, "My whole priesthood is to teach and preach the Gospel. This is my oblation! This is my sacrifice!" The church needs more prayer and preaching, and the two cannot be separated.

We welcome many of the discussions on the character of the modern pulpit. It is the forelight of a better day when men make their ideal of a sermon high, and seek by all possible diligence to come up to it. In a recent Church Congress, a speaker proposed "the more or less permanent appointment of a body of select preachers, who should be employed throughout the year, especially in towns and in country churches where the congregation was large."

Dean Alford, in his paper read at the Congress at Norwich, says "our preaching is not sufficiently adapted to the present times;" and, among other suggestions, says of sermons: "I am persuaded that a partial breaking down of their present formality would vastly increase their interest and their power. To begin with the text. It is, of course, desirable that there should be sermons whose argument or persuasion proceeds in accordance with or in amplification of certain inspired words. But it may be questioned whether our rigid practice of putting the text at the outset might not be with advantage varied. It was usual with some of our elder divines, and is now on the Continent, to introduce the text by some considerations leading to it, as, for example, the general circumstances of

the day or season, or other particular inducement which influenced the preacher in his choice of a subject; or a statement of the exact phase of the truth which he wishes to present; or an earnest pleading on some defective point, afterwards enforced by the sacred words. A text thus introduced, thus accounted for, will come with more force than if it were always abruptly given out, merely because such is the custom. Sometimes, indeed, it may be well to place our text far on in the sermon, or even towards the end. Our object is to impress on our people the sacred words; and it is for us to consider whether this may not be done in various ways instead of always in one only. Again, it is surely not of necessity that a sermon should always have a text. The free treatment of the subject might sometimes be more impressive than the grouping that treatment rigidly round some Scriptural expression. Such form of composition is not unknown to us under the name of an 'address;' but why should it not be ranked as a sermon, and have its due place and recurrence?" The Dean justly complains: "There is a divergence between the formal language and thought of the pulpit, and the realities of the life within and without. The force of habit

has rendered us different men when preaching and when not preaching. . . We fancy that it requires conventional phrases and forms of thought, and that the free expression of the feelings and yearnings of the heart is out of place. We shrink from allusion to matters of present interest as beneath the dignity of the pulpit. The descriptions are stilted and unreal; as far off actual life as a group of statuary."

"I once heard," says Emerson, "a preacher, who sorely tempted me to say I would go to church no more. Men go, thought I, where they are wont to go, else had no one entered the temple in the afternoon. A snow-storm was falling around us. The snow-storm was real, the preacher merely spectral; and the eye felt the sad contrast in looking at him, and then out of the window behind him into the beautiful meteor of the snow. He had lived in vain. He had no one word indicating that he had laughed or wept, was married or in love, had been commended, or cheated, or chagrined. If he had ever lived and acted, we were none the wiser for it. The capital secret of his profession —namely, to convert life into truth—he had not learnt. Not one fact in all his experience had he

yet imparted into his doctrine. This man had ploughed and planted out, talked, and bought and sold; he had read books; he had eaten and drunken; his head aches; his heart throbs; he smiles and suffers; yet was there not a surmise, a hint in all the discourse, that he had ever lived at all. Not a line did he draw out of real history. The true preacher can always be known by this, that he deals out to the people his life—life passed through the fire of thought."

"Dogmatic Teaching from the Pulpit" was the subject of a paper and discussion at the Congress at York. "Dogmatic preaching," said the Dean of Cork, "is in certain quarters largely unpopular. The model sermon in their eyes is that which contains the least amount of religious doctrine with the largest amount of religious sentiment—a sermon all colour and no form. They like to lose their way in company with the preacher, in a sort of warm haze of vague religious thought, and to hear him assure them that out of this mist he has neither the mission nor the power to guide them. There can be no teaching without some dogma. Dogma—that is, accepted and fixed truth—is the ground of all precept, and it is the reason of

all sentiment. One cause (of the dislike for dogmatic teaching) is the scientific spirit of the age. The man of science holds his firmest convictions only as deductions from the facts he knows. He is prepared at any moment to modify them on the discovery of new facts. Theology discovers no new facts; it neither adds nor takes from the deposit of truths which it possessed from the first. Science discovers facts, and constructs hypotheses. Faith receives revelations, accepts and clings to creeds. Science rejects authority, faith rests on it. Another cause for the dislike of dogma is the revolutionary character of modern thought."

A reason assigned by God for selecting Aaron for his office was, "I know that he can speak well." And, unless a man be "apt to teach," where are the credentials of his fitness for the Christian Ministry? The minister is a public speaker, and in the power of his tongue are death and life.

We would conclude these criticisms on public teaching by observing that many who have the right ideal of a sermon fail to realise it in practice from the want of due preparation. This want arises, not from indolence, but from the

many demands made upon ministers, especially in large cities.

Some few may excel in improvised speaking, who, in addition to other gifts, possess great intellectual foresight, that can at a glance see the end to be attained, and can command those thoughts that will secure the definite object. But even these speakers would, by due preparation, rise to higher eloquence, and excel themselves.

How often after the delivery of a sermon defects are detected which might have been prevented if time had been given, before entering the pulpit, to look at the sermon as a whole, and, if necessary, to re-arrange it. Some thoughts would have been put in the distance, others in the foreground, and others rejected altogether; and the lights and shadows would have been more skilfully arranged. We must study not only what thoughts to express, but in what order to arrange them. The increased power of a sermon delivered a second time may arise from no new thoughts, but from transposition; from a passage removed from a part where it was not needed, and was therefore intrusive, to another part, where it adds vigour, and throws a light over the whole composition.

But no preparation will anticipate all these afterthoughts, many of which will be due to the inspiration of public speaking; although the more perfect the preparation, the more receptive will the mind be of illapses. Often as the speaker approaches the crisis of his address, his mind will begin to kindle, until it reaches the white heat known to the orator. The imagination will then put out its creative power, and show by original thought that the speaker dwells in a region of his own. He will not only know metaphysically the avenues to the heart, nor stand waiting at their entrance, but will press through, and with no inconclusive sentences command the more than half-assent of the will. He will soar above all that is grovelling, into the region of the sublime; and instead of leaving his hearers behind, his elevating strain will carry them up with him. The people will join in sympathy, and surrender themselves to his appeals, in deeds of devotion and self-sacrifice.

It is not the speaker himself, tempted by worldly ambition, that has wrought up this passion; it has rather been wrought in him by his theme; his style, as well as his spirit, has taken fire by it. He is, as every true orator must be, a child of nature. This inspiration is short, for

neither the speaker nor the audience could long endure it; but when following the calm, didactic statement of truth, it is a divine, irresistible power; the speaker imparts himself, as well as delivers his message, and the people return home, saying, "How did our heart burn within us while he opened to us the Scriptures."

CHAPTER IX.

The Service of Song.

"While we sing the praises of our God in His Church," says Isaac Watts, "we are employed in that part of worship which of all others is the nearest akin to heaven; and it is pity that this, of all others, should be performed the worst upon earth. The Gospel brings us nearer to the heavenly state than all the former dispensations of God amongst men; and in these last days of the Gospel we are brought almost within sight of the kingdom of our Lord: yet we are very much unacquainted with the songs of the New Jerusalem, and unpractised in the work of praise. To see the dull indifference, the negligent and the thoughtless air that sits upon the faces of a whole assembly, while the psalm is on their lips, might tempt even a charitable observer to suspect the fervency of inward religion; and it is much to be feared that the minds of most of the

worshippers are absent or unconcerned. Perhaps the modes of our preaching in the best churches still want some degree of reformation; nor are the methods of prayer so perfect as to stand in need of no correction or improvement; but of all our religious solemnities, psalmody is the most unhappily managed: that very action, which should elevate us to the most delightful and Divine sensations, doth not only flat our devotion, but too often awakens our regret, and touches all the springs of uneasiness within us. I have long been convinced that one great occasion of this evil arises from the matter and words to which we confine all our songs."

This quotation reminds us that the former days of hymnology were not better than these, and that the Church of Christ is greatly indebted to Watts, Chas. Wesley, Cowper, Montgomery, Heber, and other hymnists, who have supplied many of the deficiencies complained of. We rank not these men with the inspired psalmists of the Jewish Church; but that God gave them His Spirit, and that under His influence many of their strains were composed, who can doubt? The prevailing desire that hymnology should include the choicest strains of Christian poets of

different denominations is no feeble testimony to an advanced taste, and enlarged Catholicity, and the Unity of the Church of Christ. Therefore, whilst honouring the memory of Watts, styled by Montgomery, Sir Roundell Palmer, and others, "the founder of English hymnology," we rejoice that his "psalms and hymns" are no longer exclusively sung in any of the churches.

"The opinion which once prevailed," says Sir Roundell Palmer, "that nothing but psalms taken directly from Scripture ought to be sung in the congregation was narrow and groundless: but the substance of Scripture, assimilated and made part of the spiritual life, has always supplied the principal matter for the best hymns; and this may explain why excellent hymns have been written by persons who have given no proofs of skill in any other kind of poetry. Religious enthusiasm, fed by the poetry of inspiration, grows like that which it lives upon, and reflects the warmth and light which it could not have originated."

Although hymns of uninspired men have been sung by the Church from earliest days, as we learn from Eusebius and other writers, yet the desirableness of singing "the high praises of God" in the language of Scripture also is very

generally admitted. The Rev. Andrew Fuller went so far as to say, "I wish the time were come when we could lay aside all men's compositions, and sing only the words of Scripture in the praises of God."

The arguments for singing in our churches the "psalms and hymns" of Scripture are many and powerful. Inspired poetry is not only superior to all mere human composition in elevation of thought, but also in that abrupt language of emotion, which causes the chords of the heart to vibrate to a degree not reached by any metrical version; the Psalms are lyrical, and were given to the "chief singer," to be accompanied by music; they possess a power over the religious emotions not fully awakened by reading: the language of praise in Scripture is also marked by a directness which makes us conscious that we are privileged worshippers in the Royal presence; such psalmody, moreover, does homage to the Bible, by the acknowledgment that no language is so suitable in which to address the Majesty of Heaven as that of His own Word; singing Scripture is in conformity with the practice of Christ and His apostles, and of the early Church; the use of such a Psalter might also serve to unite our hearts more closely to

the pious forefathers of the ancient Church, and to the different sections of Christ's followers on earth, and to attract the wanderers of Israel into our assemblies.

A wish has been expressed that all the psalms of David were chanted or sung in our churches. Such a wish proceeds from forgetfulness that not all the psalms were chanted or sung even in the Jewish Church, and that many would not be harmonious with Christian worship—the worship of those who believe that the Messiah *has* come. We may be allowed to express a wish for a selection of *all* the inspired songs in the Old and New Testaments that would be *suitable* for the service of praise. Any scholar acquainted with Hebrew poetry would confer an obligation on his age by the publication of such an inspired Psalter. Having found the poet equal to this task, we might then look to some "chief musician" to supply the necessary sacred music.

Whilst we would not yield to the prejudice of retaining any compositions, poetical or musical, of inferior merit, simply because our pious forefathers sang them, neither would we reject some of the older hymns and tones, which, in addition to their own intrinsic worth, have histories which hold spell-bound the worshipper.

The old sanctuary is fast disappearing, and the modern one taking its place. Is it nothing, then, to retain such compositions as keep in remembrance the history of many eventful generations, which constitute a bond of unity, because sung by all churches, irrespective of party names, and which bring us into communion with the spirits of just men made perfect, who once joined in the same melodies? We can understand how powerful were the associations to the Jews, when they sang the songs of Zion, either in exile or in their fatherland. The old hymns sung in our childhood, either in the home or in the family pew, come back upon us with a freshness and a touch that cannot be surpassed, and we sing as in the days of our youth. We rejoice that many of these fine old hymns are sung in all lands, and never fail to awaken profitable memories of the countries and homes that have been left. Our counsel, then, is, let us have hymns ancient as well as modern.

Our observations on the intelligent and pious forethought necessary in the selection of the Scripture lessons are also applicable to the use of the hymn-book. A familiarity with every part of it would prevent the frequent repetition

of a few favourite hymns, and secure adaptation to the particular service. The aim of the pastor, in his public ministrations, is to benefit as many states of mind as possible. This is often a difficult task. The subject of a sermon may sometimes be necessarily little adapted to individual cases, but the minister knows his reserve of strength, and selects a hymn which, whilst adapted to the discourse, yet contains one or more verses winged with tidings of comfort to certain tried mourners. Thus, as George Herbert writes:—

> "A verse may find him who a sermon flies,
> And turn delight into a sacrifice."

But what selection of song can we make for a large class of hearers concerning whom we "stand in doubt?" Whilst hymns suitable only for the closet ought to be excluded, can we keep back "the Song of the Lamb," and the utterances of Christian life? This were an injustice to "the people of God." It is true that the "strangers" may not be able heartily to join in these strains; but no more could all the Jews join sincerely in the psalms sung in their ancient church. Some individuals would meet the diffi-

culty by suggesting that the person sing only such verses as express his real feelings. There is, however, another plan. Might not hymns of praise to the Creator be more frequently sung in our churches? In these all the congregation could, more or less, unite, even the little children, who had been taught to say, "It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves." He is "the Father of spirits." The praise on many lips might quiver, and be very imperfect, but who can tell the effect of the first public acknowledgment of the greatness and goodness of the Creator?

One prominent feature of worship in the Jewish church was ascription of praise to God as the Creator. Hear some of her songs: "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord He is God; it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with praise, be thankful unto Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and make a

joyful noise unto Him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great king above all gods. In His hand are the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hills is His also. The sea is His, and He made it; and His hands formed the dry land. O come let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker."

What is the heavenly worship but the refrain, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour and power; for Thou hast *created* all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created."

How infantile our ideas of the vastness of creation, compared with those of glorified spirits! And yet we, owing to modern astronomical science, have revelations of the universe of which the man of Uz knew little, though he spoke of "Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south." How different the view of the "moon and the stars" to the men of this generation, to that of the royal Hebrew astronomer; and how much more the words of the prophets convey to us than they did to the minds of the writers! The Church does not make enough of her anthem of creation. "The heavens declare the glory of God."

The question is sometimes asked whether the hymn must *always* be a song of praise direct to God. Many of the inspired psalms are supplicatory, others *about* God, and others exhortatory; and, therefore, the form of praise may be variable—sometimes indirect. Still, the song never rises higher than when we "sing *unto* the Lord," instead of only about Him; we then more readily escape from morbid introspection of frames and feelings, have face to face communion with God, pass in our thoughts from the human to the Divine, and think only of the Object of worship. Such hymns, moreover, are to be desired in a day when many depreciate objective religion, and forget that worship derives its value from the Being to whom it is addressed.

Many of the inspired songs are *celebrations* of great events—praises to the Most High, because He has done wonderful things; and some of them partake of the character of narrative. Here we see God's regard for human nature; for what brings Him so nigh to us, or so touches our feelings, as the commemoration of the works of His hands?

The Church above understand this feeling as they sing "the Song of Moses, the servant of

God, and the Song of the Lamb." The conquests of Christ on earth are now the occasions of outbursts of triumphant joy in heaven, and ever and anon is heard the ascription of praise, "Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty." Passing events commemorated in our prayers and sermons might often be the burden of a song.

Worshippers will be little aided in their praise by songs about an abstract Deity, or full of abstract principles. The song full of the facts of Christianity, with their spiritual significations, will be the song of ascent. Take away the facts from the following hymn, or embody the spirit of them in any abstract form, and it will immediately fall low:— "Thou art the King of Glory; O Christ. Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father. When thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man, Thou didst not abhor the virgin's womb. When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. Thou sittest at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father. We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge."

A good hymn-book is no mean help to ministerial teaching, and the selection of hymns

during a year will supply to the congregation a summary of doctrine and duty, so that, literally, the word will be nigh them, even in their mouths. "So long, therefore," says Josiah Conder, "as the vital elements are embalmed in our metrical liturgy, we have the best security that no manifest departure from the Truth will gain ground among our religious teachers. Although the pulpit may contradict the reading-desk, it will not long be in dissonance with the creed of the hymn-book; at least, where the people have any voice in the choice of their pastors and teachers."

We will not ask the question, Which is the more important part of the service of song—the hymn or the singing? If the poetry of the sanctuary is helped by the music, so is the music heightened in effect by the poetry; reason and experience tell us that those songs ought to be selected for praise which express not only ideas, but feeling, and that the deepest emotions of man's nature are more easily reached by the *best poetry*, as well as by the best music. We unhesitatingly affirm that the best hymns may,

through bad singing or an unsuitable tune, fail to awaken any right feeling. Within the memories of some readers, congregational singing seemed to have been divorced from all art, and often served to repress the finer feelings of the educated hearer. It was "rustic melody, sung with the pomp of village art." With the exception of Cathedral services, the singing in the Established Church was no better.

The last few years have witnessed a simultaneous effort in the different churches of Christ to improve the singing, and the new tune-book has followed or occasioned the new hymn-book. Among the ministers and laymen who have much helped this reform in congregational music are Allon, Binney, Cooke, Curwen, Feaston, Gauntlett, Thomas, and Waite.

The subject is still engaging the attention of thoughtful men, who wish a yet greater reform, although they are not unanimous in their judgment as to its precise requirements.

"Every nation, too," says the Rev. R. W. Dale, "has its own type of popular music, and what is sung with tears or rapture by one people may utterly fail to move another. Our Congregational Psalmody should bear the impress of our national character. God has given to this

country poets who have written noble hymns; He has not withheld musicians who have married these hymns to melodies which the Church rejoices to sing; but I believe that the Charles Wesley, the Isaac Watts, and the Philip Doddridge of church music has yet to come."

"The tone of worship in Nonconformist chapels," says the Rev. Edward White, "never rises above a certain level—we might almost say, never rises to the empyrean. It is quiet, sober, orderly, devout—but never inspired, never grand, never of the nature to carry the soul on the wings of imagination to the third heavens. The flight of David's inspired muse is arrested by the string of Dr. Watts's metrical limitation. Everything is turned into measure."

The introduction of the Te Deum into the service of song in all our churches is much to be desired, whether it be recited, sung, or chanted; and when chanted, no arrangement is better than that of the Rev. Henry Allon. "It is at once a hymn, a creed, and a prayer; or rather, it is a creed taking wing and soaring heavenward; it is faith seized with a sudden joy, as she counts her treasures, laying them at the feet of Jesus in a song; it is the incense of prayer rising so near the rainbow round the throne as to

catch its light, and so become radiant, as well as fragrant; a cloud of incense illumined into a cloud of glory."

We agree with Hullah, "That religious music should have a character of its own; that whether it express strains of joy or sorrow—whether the goodness of God be sung or his mercy supplicated—the singer and the hearer should at once feel that they are not in the theatre, the concert-room, or the private chamber, but in the house of the Most High."

When Haydn was asked why his church music was always cheerful, the great composer replied, "I cannot make it otherwise. I write according to the thoughts I feel. When I think upon God, my heart is so full of joy, that the notes dance and leap as it were from my pen; and since God has given me a cheerful heart, it will be pardoned me that I serve Him with a cheerful spirit." Whilst there are seasons when the Church with heavy heart may sing her "Miserere," who does not prefer to join in her "Jubilate," her "Magnificat," her "Benedictus?" Variety also gives life to the Psalmody, when we hear the Chant and Anthem, as well as the Hymn Tune. In earlier days the assembly sometimes divided, and sang *alternately* the parts of a psalm; such anti-

phony, however, should be congregational, and not confined to a choir, as in our cathedrals.

Some tunes sound well as performances, but are not suitable for worship; they express no sentiment of thoughtfulness, penitence, adoration; they do not touch the sacred affections of a man's soul; they are "things without life giving sound." The tune should always be adapted to the hymn, and, according to some critics, the hymn should always be sung to the same tune. The devotional feeling would be intensified by the congregation enunciating distinctly not only each note, but *each word*, and thus allowing the burden of the song to be heard throughout the church; from a neglect of this distinctness, the singing is to the ear of a stranger coming into our assemblies, like an unknown tongue.

The congregation is sometimes distracted by an unsuitable voluntary at the close of the service. The solemn discourse is followed by lively, not to say noisy, playing, as if the organist had pulled out all his stops. A pious, judicious organist will always study adaptation, and will select such music as shall express and deepen the feeling already awakened. In public worship, the music that makes you think of the

man is faulty ; it should call up such aspirations as can be satisfied only in God.

Although some objections may be raised against voluntaries, there is much to be said in their favour. Many little distractions arising from the noise of the congregation assembling or dispersing are much modified by the music. Often is the minister's mind calmed and braced for the service by some sweet voluntary at the commencement, such as, "O rest in the Lord," or "Comfort ye, &c." The organist, like the leader of the singing, must be able to perform his part, not only correctly, but *feelingly*.

Difficulty is felt by many ministers in securing the unemployed musical talent in their churches. How many educated voices are never heard in the service ; numbers are mute worshippers, if, indeed, they can be called worshippers. "People seem to forget," said Dr. Guthrie, at a public meeting, "that of all parts of this earthy worship the singing is the only part we shall take with us to heaven. There will be no preaching there ; there will be no praying there ; but there the sound of God's praise is never to cease. For myself, I know nothing more revolting than to see a fine lady sit down at a piano

and warble out the finest music, who, when she comes to the house of God, sits mute, as if God's praises were not worthy of being sung."

The apology some offer for their silence is, that they make melody in their heart unto the Lord. Prayer may be silent, but praise is *demonstrative;* we enter within the gates of Zion to *publish* with the voice of thanksgiving, and to *tell* of all His wondrous works.

On the inner doors of some churches is seen a board which contains the notice of the service of song for the Sunday. When seen at the week-night service it is doubly valuable, as persons can then ascertain the numbers of hymns and tunes, and practise at home; and often is the rehearsal a blessing to the household as well as to the congregation. Sacred music should be heard in the family as well as in the church. The praises of God were sung by the primitive believers in their social gatherings, at their family altars, and even at their meals. Parents would find the exercise of this gift an auxiliary to family religion, and that in various ways, it would lead to happy evenings at home, both on Sabbaths and week days. Let the family choir be formed. "Both young men and maidens;

old men and children; let them praise the name of the Lord."

Practical questions might here be raised as to the most efficient mode of conducting singing classes, either for teaching or practising, for children or adults; whether help might not be rendered by the heads of families being present to give encouragement and support; and whether the absence of some individuals, because they have no need to practise, does not declare plainly the want of a high religious motive.

Questions might also be raised on the advantage of choirs, and on the plan, efficiently carried out by the Rev. J. T. Feaston, of the whole congregation being considered a choir, and the friends occupying different parts of the church according to their voices. On these and some other kindred points the reader must be asked to form his own opinion. We may, however, observe that vocal music written in four parts, and constituting the swelling harmony, is an arrangement founded on nature; for the Creator has formed the voices of mankind not all of the same pitch, but of different degrees. Instead, therefore, of a congregation singing in unison, and only a few individuals constituting a choir taking their parts, nature teaches that the *whole*

congregation should be a choir. The attempt of youths to sing bass would be recognised as a violation of the law of nature; scarcely less is it a violation of the same law for all the men to sing treble, and prevent the soft tones of a woman's or the thrilling sounds of a boy's voice being distinctly heard. Let the learner then find out the proper pitch of his voice, and let him occupy a pew with a friend or friends singing the same part. Not only would great facility, but also great effect be given in singing the harmonies (which ought to be easy of execution, and not abounding in difficult intervals and chromatic transitions), if *small groups* of the alto or tenor or bass were distributed in different parts of the congregation.

Musical talent may be cultivated but to little purpose, unless our churches regard the song more in its relation to worship. The indolent posture, the wandering eyes, and other interruptions during singing, not allowed during prayer, reveal the secret, that singing is not equally with prayer regarded as a worship. The modern plan of shutting the Sunday school-room door during the singing, as well as the prayer, teaches the child that singing is an important part of worship, and ought not to be interrupted. We

do not ask for our church door to be shut during singing as well as prayer, although a child might puzzle us to find an answer to the question—"Why not?"

Nearly all churches commence the singing in a faulty manner, and the effect is like that of a false pitch. Before a minister commences his prayer, he waits till the people have assumed the devotional attitude, and *perfect* stillness is restored. Now, every man's judgment will tell him that the minister is right—that it is a preparation for worship, if not a part of it. But how is it with the song of praise? The organist or precentor commences,—a few are ready to join, but not until the end of the first line have all raised their voices, or even risen from their seats. The children of this world are wiser, and at the musical festival, all, whether hundreds or thousands, rise simultaneously at the signal, and commence. Would a band, in the presence of a monarch, betray the want of respect, that many show when singing the praises of the "Prince of the kings of the earth?" Might not the congregation rise, wait for the same perfect stillness as before prayer, and then all commence? They would thus be reminded that singing was not a mere gratification to the ear,

that it was not singing to one another, but that they were preparing to stand and sing in the presence of the Throne, and to God and the Lamb. The Church below would feel herself more in concert with the Church above—both joining in the "new song" of redemption.

At the dedication of the Temple, the first utterances were those of praise, and the first manifestations of the glory were in connection with praise. "It came even to pass, that *when* they lifted up their voice, with the cymbals and instruments of music, that *then* the house was filled with a cloud. The glory of the Lord filled the house."

In a revived church, the people will seek to sing "*skilfully*," that God in all things may be glorified. If the great Creator is not honoured by the minister reading the Bible carelessly, no more is he by a person singing carelessly in the church who can sing most effectively in the drawing-room. To such he will say, "Offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee?" Should any pious parents, however, neglect to cultivate this precious gift of God, from the fear of music becoming a snare, let them ponder the weighty words of a well-known writer: "I do believe that if music has in any

instance fallen into bad hands, it is very much the fault of those who are satisfied with music in the worship of God, anything but worthy of the sublime themes of Christianity. Why should the psalmody of our congregations be a penance to a musical ear? If Protestants will practically despise music, the Devil, intimately acquainted with its power, will seize and secure it for the play-house; and the Pope, no less acquainted with its attractions, will engage it for the mass-house; and detached from the primeval fellowship, the worship of God, it will become the ally of idolatry, or banqueting and revelry, or bacchanalian excess." In ancient times the best music was in the church, and the stranger was heard saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion."

If music be not merely a human invention, but a gift of God, to be exercised for His glory as well as for our happiness, ought not every person, according to his ability, to study and practise it? That the musical service of the Jewish church might be impressively conducted, pupils in the "schools of the prophets" "were instructed in the songs of the Lord." The profit which Chrysostom, Luther, Herbert, Beveridge, and others, derived from sacred

music, suggests the desirableness of its being a part of ministerial education in the present day. Let young people well weigh the solemn words of the eminent President Edwards: "As it is commanded of God that all should sing, so all should make conscience of *learning* to sing, as it is a thing that cannot be done decently without learning. Those, therefore, who neglect to learn to sing live in sin, as they neglect what is necessary to their attending one of the ordinances of God's worship."

The reverence for God which will prevent any musical display, will impart a hallowed delight in His service. "They sang praises with *gladness*, and they *bowed the head* and worshipped." Who does not like to see the solemn assembly, after having sat to hear man's voice, rising from their seats and STANDING, as if saying to one another, "Come before His PRESENCE with singing." "Know ye not," says Chrysostom, "that you there stand with angels and sing with them?" "Consider with whom you stand in singing the sacred hymns at the communion, even with cherubim and seraphim."

History reminds us that great religious reformations have been associated with revived interest in "the service of song in the house of

the Lord." Owing to worldliness in the Jewish church, the beautiful musical service of the Temple declined; but at the revival in the reign of Hezekiah, "the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord, with the words of David and of Asaph the seer." Passing to the Christian Church, we may observe that Luther's hymns "helped his cause astonishingly; they spread among all classes of the people, and were sung, not only in the churches and schools, but also in the houses and workshops, in the streets and market-places, in lanes and fields. Referring to our own country, Bishop Jewel states, that "nothing promoted the Reformation more than inviting the common people to sing psalms, and that sometimes there would be six thousand persons at St. Paul's Cross singing together, which was very grievous to the papists." Allusion may also be made to the Reformation in Scotland. Concerning the great American revival in his day, President Edwards writes: "Our public praises were greatly enlivened. In our psalmody, God was served in the beauty of holiness. There has been no part of divine worship in which good men have had grace so drawn forth, and their hearts so lifted up in the

ways of God, as in singing his praise. The people sang with unusual elevation of heart and voice." Recent revivals testify that churches "filled with the Spirit" cannot refrain from "singing and making melody in their heart to the Lord." Nor ought we to feel surprise. Music is the language not only of ideas, but of emotion; the outburst of praise; the heart seeking relief by telling its joy. Our wonder is, how any people believing the marvellous proclamation of the love of God to man, can keep silent, or passionless sing His praises.

The valuable auxiliary of psalmody to a revival may be further learnt from the very opposition it has encountered. The translation of the Psalms into French verse, and singing them in the Protestant meetings, attracted large crowds of all ranks. Rome took the alarm. Clement Marot, one of the translators, was expatriated. Claude Goudimel, who had been active in setting the metrical psalms to music, was murdered; and the French Government passed a law threatening punishment to every one found singing psalms in the language of the people!

CHAPTER X.

The Lord's Supper.

This sacred symbolic institution is thus described in the words of Scripture: "And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And He said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives."

Many are the titles by which this institution is known. It is spoken of as "the breaking of bread," "the Communion," "the Eucharist," and "the Lord's Supper;" all which appellations are in harmony with Scripture. The ordi-

nance is not a sacrifice, but a feast—a feast commemorative of a sacrifice. The painting of Leonardo da Vinci, representing the long table with the cup and loaf, and around it the disciples sitting, or rather reclining, with Jesus in their midst, conveys a tolerably correct idea of the primitive mode of celebration.

The simplicity which characterises the institution of the Supper must strike every reader. We see a table with a loaf and a cup; each of the disciples eats a piece of the bread broken by the Master of the feast, and sips the wine from the cup that is passed from His hands. Such was the symbolism of this new festival. The simplicity of it, and the inartificial manner in which the Saviour passed from the Paschal to the Christian Supper, were not accidental, but designed; and every departure from it is a violation of the Master's will.

How characteristic was this of the Saviour and His mission; how it contrasted with the ceremonial dispensation that was waning away; how it marked an advance from the Church's childhood to maturer age, and gave a foreshadow of spiritual manhood in that world, concerning which the Apostle John said, "I saw no temple therein;" how it taught that, whilst some sort

of symbolism was necessary, only our Lord knew what was adapted to the Christian Church, so that it should not obscure the truth, stand between Him and the soul, lead the communicant to accept the rite as a substitute for spiritual life, and eventually so to consecrate the symbol as to make it the object of worship.

We see in all God's works nothing that is unnecessary or without a great moral purpose. The manna no longer falls when Israel enters the promised land, and the Passover ceases with the old dispensation. The Messiah long predicted has come, and His wondrous death is a great historic fact. The elaborate symbolism which aided the mind of the Jew to conceive this great truth is no longer needed; the types retire before the antitype. The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of something that is passed, and therefore the simplest symbol, obeying the law of association, recalls to the mind the name, person, character, and doings of a friend that has been among us and is gone. The Lord's Supper is not so much to give the idea as to retain it.

How the Apostle Peter would stand aghast, could he be present at the celebration of the Lord's Supper in some communions that profess

to give him special honour! What would he think of the altar, the candles burning at noonday, the incense, the gaudy vestments, the elevation of the consecrated elements, the mutterings and incantations, the prostrations? What would the Fisherman say to all this spectacle and sensation? Would he not exclaim, in the language of his "beloved brother Paul," "This is not to eat the Lord's Supper?"

In many churches there may be little fear of dramatic display, of anything answering to the sensuous—turning a table into an altar, a ministry into a priesthood, and having a chancel within the mystic enclosure of which shall be seen the bread and the cup. Yet even in these churches do we never hear unguarded mystic expressions? Why should the minister presiding be spoken of as *administering* the Sacrament, as if the Scripture acknowledged any administrator? Why say, "Jesus took bread and blessed *it*," taking special care, moreover, to lay the emphasis on the "it," which is not in the Greek? Would it not be more Scriptural to say, "Jesus took bread," "having blessed," or "having blessed." God? An examination of the records given by the different Evangelists of the Lord's Supper, and of our Lord feeding the multitude with the

seven loaves and few fishes, will show that the words convey the idea expressed elsewhere—"And when He had given thanks." We may add that, at our daily meals, it would be less mystic to ask a friend to "give thanks" for the food than to ask him to "say grace." Why not, when using the formula, "This is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many," adopt the better translation, "the blood of the new covenant?" the Supper being the commemoration of the "new covenant?" Why put the emphasis on the following words, "Do *this* in remembrance of *me*," instead of "Do this in *remembrance* of me?" The former position of the emphasis not only fails to bring out the right meaning of our Lord's words, but conveys a false one.

Among unguarded expressions may also be included any approach to tragedy, with a view to excite deep feeling in the breasts of the communicants. All such descriptions of our Lord's bodily sufferings will fail to awaken the real emotions of humiliation for sin, and love for the Sin-bearer, and will be followed by a painful reaction. Such representations, moreover, misrepresent the anguish of the Saviour when He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto

death." The perfect calmness of the Evangelists in narrating the Supper is suggestive; they knew that the event was so touching that it needed only to be clearly stated. "He died for us!" What comment can we add to such words?

Some ministers manifest peculiar adaptation of gifts at "The Lord's Table." Their few suggestive sentences are uttered with subdued emotion, with the power of gentleness. Their very omissions prove their enviable gift of knowing what *not* to say. The unaffected simplicity and humility (common alike to piety and greatness) which they possess, very much aid the devotions of their fellow communicants. Instead of being called Rabbi, or seeming to sit in Jesus' seat at the table, their language is, "One is our Master, even Christ; and all we are brethren;" "I am among you as he that serveth;" "Your servant for Jesus' sake." It may be added that this sociality would be more manifest by the office-bearers or other communicants sitting near to the pastor, and not at a distance, as in some churches, owing to the position of the Communion Table.

The appellation of the Supper suggests the meal when friends are invited to partake of the

hospitalities of the family, and share each other's confidence, and is therefore peculiarly applicable to the Supper of our Lord, who not only was present with His disciples, whom he called "My friends," and distributed to them the bread and wine, but also ate and drank with them.

No particular hour of the day is commanded by our Lord for the observance of this institute. No argument, we think, can be derived from the word δεῖπνον. The first Supper was in the after part of the day; and at Troas bread was broken in the evening. Some of the earliest writers speak of the observance of the Supper at night; and hence, according to some critics, the origin of the custom of lighted candles on the altar. The Supper was, however, also observed by the Primitive Church in the morning. Some churches have the Supper alternately morning and evening, to suit the convenience of the members. The evening celebration secures advantages to the Sunday School teacher and many others, and is generally associated with much stillness.

In addition to hindrances already referred to, many others may arise in this service. Often has the devout feeling been chilled by the feast being commenced before all the communicants

were seated, and perfect stillness secured; by the reading of notices after, instead of before the service; by an unsuitable tune from a leader with a cold, undevotional voice; by the noisy footsteps of an elder; by the unsuppressed cough; by the harsh sound of a communion cup struck against another when replaced on the table; by the undue length of the Service, or that which preceded it, compelling, perhaps, a servant to leave the church before the Supper is ended, and interfering with Sunday School teachers, and with the arrangements of divided families.

The "contribution for the poor saints" will not be deemed an interruption, but rather an appeal to love and pity. Piety will regard it as the Lord's money, as a thank-offering, as "God's gift;" and the heart will wonder at the amazing condescension of Him who owns it as an act of worship: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these *my brethren*, ye did it unto me."

If less time were occupied in taking round the bread and wine, and longer pauses allowed for silent meditation, the devotion would be deeper. It is true that time is afforded for reflection whilst the fellow communicants are

being served; yet the perfect hush, when not a voice nor a footstep is heard—the solemn stillness during the intervals—is much to be desired. The institute appeals to the eye and to the ear.

How shall we best persuade non-communicants to remain as spectators? The absence of many is owing not to indifference, but to a fear of publicity, the dislike of separation, or to despondency. What benefit might they not derive from being present and thoughtfully looking on. Many have at such times envied the people of God, have wished not only to die their death, but live their life, and have willingly complied with the invitation, "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good."

The Church has not sufficiently thought of the Lord's Supper in relation to children. The Hebrew child partook with the family of the Passover, on the ground of a natural relationship. With the Lord's Supper it must be the child's spiritual relationship to Jesus and His people; the child must be "born, not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God;" the sonship must be higher than that of any mere earthly relationship. Let a son or daughter manifest spiritual life, and who can forbid the Supper to one who has received the Holy

Ghost as well as we? We may often accept applicants of an age much younger than that required for taking part in the business matters of the church.

Few would doubt the propriety of a large class of young people staying as spectators. Many would be led to ask their parents as did the Hebrew children, "What mean ye by this service?" and become intelligent inquirers. The symbolic character of the Supper makes it especially appropriate to young minds—it is teaching by emblems. Alas! at an early period the simplicity of this ordinance was obscured, and mysteriousness associated with every part of it, so that it was called the "mystery"—a title suggested by the mysteries of the heathen. One of the many ill effects was the exclusion of all non-communicants from witnessing the Supper. The Supper is a testimony borne by the Church to the world; it is a showing forth of the Lord's death—a publishing openly, a declaring aloud; and spectators should not be excluded.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper may be viewed in different aspects, but in none more important than as an act of worship to the Lord Christ. What a testimony this institute bears not only to the purity of our Lord's character,

and to the tenderness of His heart, but also to His divine authority! What mere man would have instituted such an ordinance in commemoration of himself? That the celebration of the Supper was considered as an act of Divine homage, may be learnt from the Apostle Paul's argument when telling the Corinthians, "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."

The Divine authority of our Lord was asserted not only on the night when He instituted the feast, but afterwards, when from His throne He repeated His command to His new apostle. With what solemnity Paul declares his commission to the church at Corinth: "For I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread."

A devout communicant is a worshipper of One who has been received up into heaven. He does not, therefore, seek the living among the dead—not a dead Christ, but One that was dead and is alive again, and is alive for evermore.

If the Lord's Supper be an act of worship, what reverence should be manifested by the communicants. This leads us to offer a remark on

the primitive posture, which was sitting or reclining. The first departure from this attitude was standing to receive the bread and wine, and the second, kneeling. The motive which first prompted the attitude of standing or kneeling may have been reverence, but that much superstition has often been associated with it, few will deny. In approaching as near as possible to the primitive practice, so suggestive of a friendly meal, let us guard that the sitting posture does not degenerate into a lounge, or any attitude of irreverence. If propriety of gesture at meals be required by every well-regulated family, shall we show indifference, or undue familiarity, at the King's table, nay, "the Lord's table," and when we are drinking "the cup of the Lord?"

The infrequency with which some communicants attend the Lord's table is not always owing to worldly indifference, but to false notions of long preparations, increased responsibility, and the possibility of the service losing its impressiveness. Such irregularity, however, is injurious to the communicant; it furnishes a bad example to others, and is not honouring the Lord Jesus. The Apostle Paul does not say how often the Supper was to be observed, but

frequency is implied in the spirit of his instructions to the Corinthians. The early Christians used to meet every Lord's day to break bread, and never found that the *living fellowship* at the table lost its freshness. In after times, as men associated the Supper with all that was mysterious, and believed in "the real presence," in the unscriptural view of the phrase, many were afraid to partake, although they might sometimes be present in the church.

The ordinance reminds us that "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." The two advents of our blessed Lord must be viewed together at His table. "Ye do shew the Lord's death till He come." The early Christians knew this promise, "I will come again;" and, "as often" as they assembled for the breaking of bread they remembered His words, and took the cup not only as a commemoration of His first, but as a pledge of His second coming. They believed, and spake, and looked for "that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." "Our life is hid with Christ in God," they would say one to another, and

"when Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory."

Let us rejoice that Jesus is still in the midst of His people, as he said, "Lo, I am with you always." The priestly, exclusive pretensions in the present day about "the real presence" at the Lord's Supper should call forth a protest, and a challenge, wherein are we "inferior to other churches," except that we do not believe in the doctrine of transubstantiation or consubstantiation? "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God." We believe that the spiritual presence is in the heart of every devout communicant not in the bread, in persons not in things, and no man shall stop us of this boasting.

We attempt no metaphysical discussion, how the Divine Spirit communes with the human, for we know not how among men mind communes with mind. It is enough for us to know that the Master has said, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name there am I in the midst of them;" and our consciousness attests the fulfilment of the promise. We talk not of a divided Christ, but take the promise: "There am *I* in the midst of them." What interruption of fellowship can distance in space

be to Him? Was Stephen farther off in spiritual intercourse from Jesus when he saw the heavens opened, and the Son of God standing on the right hand of God, than was John when he turned to see the voice that spake to him, and fell at His feet as dead?

Let not the wavering faith of any communicant prompt the question, "What think ye, that He will not come to the feast?" for the believer in all ages has gone to the table and felt the Saviour's promised presence. In the Lord's Supper "we have fellowship one with another;" nay more, for "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

One of the earliest appellations of this institute was "the Eucharist," suggested by the word *εὐχαριστήσας*, having given thanks. It was a favourite designation with the Primitive Church, and is most suggestive of the emotion awakened by the celebration of the feast. Who can retire with an unthankful heart after having received the memorials of a love that "passeth knowledge?" The feeling of the communicant may be sometimes that of humiliation as well as joy; still, whether the heart be broken by penitential grief, or expanded with the "joy unspeakable," thanksgiving will be on the lip.

CHAPTER XI.

Miscellaneous.

WHILST most of the following subjects will be regarded as important, some few may be thought as too obvious to need a warning. It will, however, be found through life, that common errors are among the last to be detected and abandoned; they are so constantly before our eyes, that we fail to see them until pointed out. Hence, a stranger in a church may notice little peculiarities, which seem not to distract the constant attendants; and yet it may be found that long familiarity with them has not prevented an unconscious bad influence.

SEEMING TRIFLES.

In the reading of the Scriptures it may be well, as a preventive of abrupt transition to

another part of service, to signify that the lesson is concluded. Let the speaker, however, avoid the phrase, "Thus endeth the reading of the * * lesson," which is unmeaning; and, when associated with pulpit mannerisms, awakens a sense of the ludicrous. The correct formula is, "Here endeth," &c.

Sometimes the entire hymn is read aloud, and then "versed out." Would it not be better, except when the hymn is unknown, to read the first verse only? The following plan will probably meet with approval:—Let the minister or precentor announce twice, the number of the hymn and tune, and read the first verse; let the organist then play the tune, and after a short pause, whilst the sound of the key-note is on the ear, let the people join in singing.

In announcing the text, how often is the wrong order observed. Suppose the speaker to say that his text is the middle clause of the third verse of the first chapter of the First Epistle to Timothy. By reversing this order, and making suitable pauses between each part, time is allowed for the hearer to find the place in his Bible without the feeling of confusion.

The different titles sometimes given by ministers to the inspired writers, when an-

nouncing the text, have called forth remark. Let us suppose the following illustration :—Our first lesson will be found in Jonah, and the second in the first Epistle of *Saint* Peter. Why have the prefix "Saint" before the apostle and not before the prophet? Why use the word "Saint" at all! Rather say, "The Book of the *Prophet* Jonah" and "The Epistle by the *Apostle* Peter."

Pulpit notices ought to be few in number, well written out, and read before the sermon. Some announcements are not suitable for the pulpit. A notice-board might better supply the want, and prevent the pulpit being made an advertising office.

Some devout persons feel their worship disturbed, not only by what offends the ear, but also by what offends the eye. Blame them not, when their feelings are consonant with laws of nature. Some have not a musical ear, and therefore are not troubled by false notes; but they have a correct eye, which is pained by anything out of place—the Communion Table, the pulpit cushion, the Bible, or any blind or curtain. The comfort of the worshippers is often disturbed by draughts or heat, from the chapel-keeper not observing the direction of the wind

in opening or closing a window. These and other hindrances might be prevented by the appointment of a person of good taste and judgment, as well as obliging disposition, to attend to these matters before and during the service. It should not be a chapel-keeper, but a friend, who should act as an overseer.

In some churches a number of gentlemen agree, either constantly or in turn, to introduce strangers to pews; and God has blessed them and their disinterested services. Much of their success will depend on the quiet, unobtrusive manner, patient forbearance, power of discrimination, and love to men. The notion that any one will do for a pew-opener is a great mistake, and has deterred thousands from regularly attending a place of worship. In large populous cities many enter our churches, but, from the cool reception they meet with, soon cease to attend. Such a committee of pious, judicious friends, as now supposed, would soon know all the congregation, and would watch for opportunity to speak to individuals who are not identified with any of the various organizations of the church. This committee might have a supply of tracts, which, with discretion, might be slipped into the hands of strangers. A

useful plan has been recommended: that of some one standing in the porch at the commencement of the service, to direct strangers to such aisles as may be deemed best: many a timid person, half afraid to open the church door, has thus been encouraged to enter.

MISQUOTATIONS, &c.

We have no sympathy with the criticism that would exclude all Scripture from the prayer or sermon, for suitable quotations not only illustrate and confirm, but impart an abiding living freshness. The prejudice we refer to may be accounted for.

Quotations are often limited to a few passages, which are reiterated until their original effect is destroyed, and the words losing their spirit, sound like cant phrases. This limitation of our choice to a few favourite passages out of the wide range of Scripture by no means honours God. Scripture is often quoted incorrectly, and among the many misquotations, we might mention the following:—"Diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;" "That he who runs may read;" "The spirit of

prayer and the grace of supplication;" "Greater is He that is for us than all they that be against us;" "Wise above what is written." Sometimes additions are made to passages of Scripture, as in the following:—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them, and that to bless them." "That the Word of the Lord may have free course, run, and be glorified;" "Let us, therefore, come with humble boldness unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy to forgive, and find grace to help in every time of need;" "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, or are worthy to receive;" "If Thou, Lord, shouldst be strict to mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand." In some quotations the true meaning of the passages is quite overlooked, as—"That he may hear the sound of his Master's feet behind him;" "The upper springs and nether springs;" "The residue of the Spirit." Sometimes the combination of passages gives a false implication, as, for instance, when persons say, "His favour is life, and His lovingkindness is better than life."

Many conventional phrases of an objectionable character might be mentioned, such as "Seals

to his ministry and souls for his hire;" "Like giants refreshed with new wine;" "Bless the minister we sit under;" "The minister who is set over us;" "Remember our cause." There are many denominational technicalities that should have no place in prayer and sermon, and that create a great prejudice in a stranger.

We rejoice that the worse than quaint titles, such as Rehoboth, or Zoar, or Adullam, are now nearly unknown, and that the names of our places of worship are generally taken from the names of the immediate localities, and thus serve as landmarks for the help of visitors.

INTERVALS.

A service may be abridged, but never hurried over, either in reality or appearance. When a great actress was asked the secret of her success, she replied, "Learning to take time." The priceless value of the rhetorical pause is often seen when the neglect of it spoils a service. Before the minister commences, not only his prayer, but any other part, let him wait for perfect stillness. The pauses must be short, and conspicuous only by their absence.

ATTITUDE.

Our churches may seldom witness persons entering with their hats on, or stamping along the aisle, or banging a pew door, or whispering, or exchanging nods with their friends; yet the attitude of the body may not always be reverential. Under the new dispensation, we are not bound by ceremonial laws, yet may need the warning, "But take heed, lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak." "For brethren, ye have been called to liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh." Standing or kneeling was the attitude of the primitive worshippers; and who does not feel that, except in cases of bodily infirmity, sitting is not appropriate to worship; much less the lounging posture. What subject, presenting a petition to an earthly monarch, would sit in his presence? Even the Saviour himself "kneeled down and prayed, saying, Father." In a day of ultra-ritualism, when men are drilled into ecclesiastical postures, and make a worship of prostrations, it may require care how we enforce devotional attitudes; though it is to be feared there may be now, as in days past, a reaction,—men, out of disgust at

artificial postures, going to the opposite extreme. Rightly understood, there is nothing artificial or conventional in the postures of standing and kneeling; they are only the natural expression of the feeling they are supposed to represent.

THE VOICE.

Our responsibility before God for the right management of the voice is not sufficiently felt. We justly condemn the man who, in practice, if not in theory, says that the use of language is to conceal ideas; but we forget that false tones will conceal the meaning of right words, misinterpret them, and render powerless appeals to the emotions.

The dulness of a religious service is not unfrequently owing to the bad delivery of him who conducts it. The minister may not, indeed, intone the service, but yet he monotones it; and we fail to discover any change of key as he passes from the confession, which should be plaintive, though not dismal, to thanksgiving, which should be cheerful and jubilant. We recently heard the beautiful burial service of the Book of Common Prayer marred by this fault. Judging from the

tones of the reader's voice, it seemed to be a sad calamity that "Now is Christ risen from the dead." In the same tones he uttered the awful mystery, "In Adam all die," and the joyful tidings, "In Christ shall all be made alive."

The minister should speak with divers tongues, and find how forcible is written language when translated by the language of the eye, of the gesture, of the voice. He should be a polyglot.

We suggest nothing artificial, but urge naturalness. Now, it is not natural to assume clerical tones, or to utter sacred truths flippantly; or to give out common notices, and offer solemn prayer in the same manner,—to talk to our Maker as we do to our fellow-men.

The power of a well-disciplined voice was understood by the Athenians, who had different classes of vocal trainers, known as the vociferarii, who sought to give strength and compass to the voice; the phonasci, who sought to improve the quality of the voice, and make it sonorous—to give it a ring; and the vocales, who attended to the intonations and inflections. It is also well known that the Jesuits pass through a severe ordeal, lasting several years, before they engage in public speaking.

The voice of a public speaker is aided by the

ear being educated to measure its compass, and to appreciate nice distinction of sounds. When beginning to speak, especially in a strange building, the ear should be consulted as to the right pitch.

Sometimes a speaker keeps thinking of the tones of his voice, and the bad effect is soon noticed in mouthing and other artificialities. The voice should not be the subject of thought whilst we are speaking in public; but we should leave right feelings to suggest right tones.

Some ministers do not sufficiently lower the key in prayer, from a fear of not being heard; but if, instead of standing and bending the head, they would kneel and expand the chest, and speak distinctly, a whisper would travel the length of the building, especially in our modern churches, in which pulpits are seldom too high. A musical voice is not only more pleasant, but is better heard.

It is said that Lord Macaulay most carefully prepared his great speeches, and that his memory easily recalled the words as well as the ideas, but that he did not commit these speeches to paper, because he supposed that it would injure the delivery. It will be admitted that any conscious effort of memory to recall the premeditated words

of our address mars the intonations of the voice; and the reason is, that the mind is taken off from the theme, which should suggest the right words and tones, and loses the readiness to exercise other of its powers necessary for effective speaking.

Our memory should be exercised in recalling the topics rather than the words of a discourse. Some censors of memoriter preaching will yet make a concession, that it may be necessary occasionally to commit to memory the words of certain passages.

"The eye and the voice must not be neglected in public speaking. The speaker is personally addressing us face to face and eye to eye. There is the quick and subtle interchange of personal sympathy. It is this which, when raised to a high pitch, constitutes the attraction of the orator. The human voice and the human eye, the most subtle and penetrative of all influences, give him an entrance to the mind and heart of every member of his audience; he addresses each of them, and each listens to the personal appeal. But in an ordinary pulpit all this is gone. The eye of the clergyman is off his audience, and his voice, by a natural consequence, is not addressed to them. This defect in the

delivery reacts upon the composition of a sermon, and the clergy get into a general, vague, impractical way of talk, addressed to nobody in particular, and with which nobody feels particularly concerned."

Some speakers have a good voice, yet signally fail, whilst others, less favoured by nature, excel. The reason is, that the latter know how to use their voice; they remind us of a skilful performer who can play well even on an inferior instrument, and can conceal many of its defects. Some have spoken impressively, notwithstanding many personal failings. Charles James Fox had a voice of small compass and graceless elocution, and commenced in a hesitating manner; yet, says Sir James Mackintosh, "he forgot himself and everything around him; he darted fire into his audience; torrents of impetuous and irresistible eloquence swept along their feelings and convictions." Edmund Burke, in addition to other defects, had a delivery harsh and frigid, and his speeches, read even to this day, were delivered before nearly empty benches. The speaker must not only have feeling, but allow it to be expressed by his voice. It has been strikingly said, that the secret of Chalmers' strength was "his blood earnestness."

PUNCTUALITY.

Who could tell the effect if, when the minister entered the pulpit, the congregation could say by their speaking eyes, "We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God!" The influence of late comers on the mind of the minister is chilling, and for it they incur great responsibility. Every church can record examples of the most punctual attendance, and of such persons the minister can say, These "have been a comfort unto me." An old disciple, recently deceased, once joined the public worship a minute after the time, and confessed that he felt an agony; late attendance he regarded as dishonouring God.

Some persons say, "Only a minute!" In a large factory the total loss to a master by each man being late only a minute would be considerable. In a congregation of five hundred, if each person were late only a minute, eight hours would be lost to worship. "Will a man rob God?" The real cause of this fault is a defective view of religious service as a worship. Might not improved punctuality be secured by the minister entering the pulpit a little before the time, and then

commencing to the minute? It would be teaching by example.

PHILOSOPHY OF ARRANGEMENT.

The plan of having several short prayers is generally approved, when each prayer has a distinctive feature, or, at least, is not a repetition of that which preceded it. If a minister feels at any time that he has emptied his heart, and has nothing more to ask, the congregation will be benefited by the omission of any further prayer.

The topics and order of the prayers must be left to the discretion of the minister. Confession, thanksgiving, and intercession naturally should be prominent topics, in whatever order they may be placed. It is customary with some to offer a very brief prayer immediately before the sermon, and with great advantage alike to minister and people.

There is, however, a further arrangement, highly conducive to public worship, the influence of which is felt rather than seen. Every public speaker knows the advantage of arrangement. The power of an argument, or the vividness of a rhetorical figure, will depend upon the

position given to it. Some addresses are full of the most beautiful ideas, but fail to impress an audience, simply from the want of arrangement, for the same thoughts, well disposed, would often electrify. Illustrations of the importance of this principle may be borrowed from the artist and musician, and from the florist, for even the nosegay will be pretty or otherwise, according to the skilfulness of the hand that ties the flowers together.

But the principle of arrangement may be applied, not only to the sermon and prayer, but also to the *entire service.* Sometimes public worship awakens devout feelings at the commencement, but the middle of it witnesses a decline, and the end a positive weariness. Why is it? Is it not frequently owing to the neglect of the principle now laid down?

Sometimes the parts of the service are too independent of each other—a number of separate links, but forming no chain, more like the divisions of some sermons, which have no connection with each other, and serve only as non-conductors! At other times there is too much sameness in these parts, as if the minister thought variety inconsistent with unity; for example, the sermon, chapters, prayers, hymns, chants, have all been

exclusively about the light of glory; yet to the surprise of unreflecting minds, there has been no burst of joy, except at the commencement: had the light, however, been occasionally hid, so as to relieve the mind of the people, and then emerged again from a cloud, the emotion had been reawakened. The entire service may be made up of dissimilar parts, but yet mutually dependent, and contributing to a common effect.

The growing error in some religious services is constant straining for effect; the greatest possible degree of tension; the highest pitch of excitement: and the result, long before the close of the service, is similar to that produced by the sameness noticed elsewhere. There is a reaction.

It is true that the entire service, like a sermon, ought to progress in power and interest, so that the people shall complain of the brevity rather than of the length; but the progress must be that of a spiral ascent, and with many a landing-place for rest; or, like that of a tide, gradually covering the beach, but after many successive ebbs. The hearers want rest in some parts of the service—the still waters, the calm summer's eve, the distillation of the dew, the power of gentleness. This repose will, whilst relieving the more powerful emotions, enhance their strength,

and make the fire, the earthquake, and the whirlwind more awfully grand. Such variety is seen in the teaching of Christ.

Young speakers aim at effect, and do not sufficiently study the laws that govern powerful emotion. It is a mistake to seek to prolong high feeling, or very frequently to excite it, as sensational services attest. It is better to rely upon the genuine religious affections awakened by the simple statement of Divine truth.

Some stoics, possibly, will recommend simply instruction, and condemn all efforts to excite spiritual emotions; but how can thoughts of the love of God ever be separated from religious fervour?

SILENT PRAYER.

The silent prayer occasionally adopted at our religious meetings is not a mere modern custom; the "hour of prayer" in the Jewish Church was a time for silent devotion with those that went up into the temple to pray. A lesson may be learnt also from the Quakers' meeting-house; for if the Friends have too much silence in their service, we have too little in ours.

All approve of the silent prayer at the close of

a religious service, when the people, impressed with the sermon, send up secret ejaculations, and would be sorry if, immediately after the Amen to the minister's prayer, the congregation rushed to the door, as if they were "hasty to go out of His sight." How intense is sometimes the silence of those precious moments! so intense, that it has a language of its own.

Why, then, should there not be simultaneous silent prayer at the *commencement* of the service? One church, if not many more, is known to have adopted it for years, and with general satisfaction. The still minute calms the mind of the congregation, and prepares it for audible worship. It is true that each man, as he enters his pew, may engage in a private prayer, but there is a different feeling when the people are praying simultaneously, praying for each other, and with each other, for the common petition would be for a blessing on the service.

Such a silent prayer is a relief to the minister, who is conscious that no form, nor any audible extempore prayer from one man, is likely to meet every want of the congregation, and that here an opportunity is given to the individual worshipper to pray for himself and for others. He is, moreover, reminded of the personal

responsibility of prayer—that every man must pray for himself.

Commencing the service with a very short, silent prayer, without any other intimation than that of the pastor bending the knee, is simple and unobtrusive; and it is no break in the worship, as it is when it is introduced in the middle of the service.

There is a worship that cannot be translated into words, that would be interrupted by a voice. The thought of the heart is as Bishop Patrick expresses it, "It becometh us, O God, ... to praise Thee in the sanctuary, though we cannot worthily express, but must rather *silently* adore Thy incomparable excellencies." "Meditation," says Robertson, "is done in silence. . . . . Only in the sacredness of inward silence does the soul truly meet the secret-hiding God. . . . . There is a divine depth in silence. We meet God alone. Silence knows more of Him than speech. His name is Secret: therefore, beware how ye profane His stillness. In prayer, you have been conscious of more than earth present in the silence, and a Hand in yours, and a Voice that you could hear, and almost the Eternal breath upon your brow." What is such an exercise of

the soul but the language of the Psalmist, "Praise waiteth for Thee, O God, in Zion;" or, as some render the passage, "Praise waiteth *silently* for Thee, O God, in Zion."

CHILDREN IN THE SANCTUARY.

Reason demonstrates the value of special services for youth, in which the preacher may talk to them in their own language, enter into their little wants, and seek out such illustrations as their imagination can take hold of. To be a successful preacher to the young, we must, in a certain sense, speak as a child, think as a child, and feel as a child. And may not our usual public worship be so conducted as to interest and profit children? If a child is riveted whilst listening to a story, though twice told, shall not the Book of all story books for children—the Bible—exert its spell? Cannot a Sunday reading contain one of the thousand mental pictures therein? Hundreds of little eyes would sparkle and gaze on the minister as he read the wondrous life of the Saviour, or one of His beautiful parables. It must be, however, the right sort of reading, such a familiarity with the sacred page that we

could often take off our eyes and fix them on the assembly. Would not a series of public readings from Scripture by a first-class reader be most attractive and useful, and show how superior was the Bible to all our English or foreign classics? We do not make enough of God's Book.

The sermon, also, ought to be so constructed that youth shall have a portion: instead of adapting the style of the whole to them, let there be a child's corner, some fact or illustration chosen more especially, though not exclusively for them. Such passages will be listened to with eagerness by those also of mature age. The moment the minister appeals to the youth of his congregation, that moment is the signal for a hush and expectancy. Some ministers, like Dr. Collyer, have kept children, as well as adults, spell-bound. The two pictures by Millais, "My First Sermon" and "My Second Sermon," are silent rebukes. Pointing to the exquisite figure of the little child asleep in church, the late Archbishop of Canterbury thus addressed the clergy: "She . . . has, in truth, by the eloquence of her silent slumber, given us a warning of the evil of lengthy sermons and drowsy discourses."

THE POOR, ETC.

Some persons have suggested separate services for the poor, and such occasionally may be profitable; but ordinarily we prefer that "the rich and the poor" should meet together. Is it nothing for caste to cease, if only on the Sabbath; for master and servant, the high and the low, to hear their relative duties enforced, and to unite in the same confession, "All we, like sheep, have gone astray;" "There is none righteous, no, not one;" "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons?" Oh! is it not one of the many softening and re-uniting influences of public worship, and of the Christian Sabbath?

The difficulty of finding suitable language for addressing a promiscuous congregation is more imaginary than real. The well-known words of Lord Brougham, in his "Dissertation on the Eloquence of the Ancients," will encourage many a speaker: "Clear, strong, terse, yet natural, and not strained expressions; happy antithesis; apt comparisons; forms of speech that are natural without being obvious; harmonious periods, yet various, spirited, and never mono-

tonous or too regularly balanced;—these are what will be always sure to captivate every audience; and yet in these mainly consists finished and elaborate and felicitous diction. . . The best speakers of all times have never failed to find that they could not speak too well, or too carefully, to a popular assembly; that if they spoke their best—the best they could address to the most learned and critical assembly, they were sure to succeed."

The common people heard the Great Teacher gladly, and yet He never descended below the standard that was equally suitable for all classes.

Whatever may be his audience, the speaker would do well to profit by the suggestion of Archbishop Trench: "While all language must be figurative, yet long familiar use is continually wearing out the freshness and sharpness of the stamp, so that to create a powerful impression, language must be recalled, minted, and issued anew, and cast into novel forms. This is the secret of all effectual teaching; of all speaking which shall leave, as was said of the eloquence of Pericles, stings in the minds and memories of the hearers."

THE PECUNIARY OFFERING.

In the temple at Jerusalem, chests were affixed to some of the pillars, to receive the offerings of the people. We rejoice that a like opportunity is given in our churches for the worshippers to "bring an offering and come into His courts." Jesus accepts our offering as an act of worship, and says, "ye have done it unto Me."

THE BENEDICTION

should not be pronounced in a perfunctory manner, nor as if it were a priest's blessing, but with the primitive simplicity. The early custom for the lector to commence with the words "peace be with you," and for the congregation to reply, "and with thy spirit," was expressive of that sympathy which should exist between pastor and people, and should be implied in the benediction also. Some prefer to use the form, "be with us all," instead of, "be with you all." If this preference arise from any fear of priestism, it is enough to say that it is only in the affectionate spirit of a brother, that Paul uses

these words. Might not other passages of Scripture, besides that of 2 Cor. xiii. 14, be occasionally used, as Num. vi. 24, Eph. vi. 23, Heb. xiii. 20 and 21? We think it is better to give the text in its native simplicity than to paraphrase it.

CHAPTER XII.

Spiritual Life Essential to Public Worship.

In the introduction, reference was made to a felt want in public worship. From our criticisms it will be seen that the want is many-sided, and that candour compels the admission that, apart from more spiritual life, nothing can secure a higher type of worship. In some communities public worship resembles, if not a stagnant pool, yet a well, the water of which *has to be forced up by artificial means;* whereas it should be like the fountain, bubbling up of its own accord, and playing at all seasons; "A good man shall be satisfied from himself;" and the water Christ "shall give him shall be *in* him a well of water *springing up* into everlasting life." There is a spontaneity in such living worship, and it varies little with change of outward circumstances, whether it be favourable or otherwise.

"The place where prayer is wont to be made" will be resorted to when men "take delight in approaching God." The want of spiritual life prevents the enjoyment of spiritual worship; hence the craving for the artificial, the gratification of the senses. This is a temptation of the present day. If the man is not "satisfied from himself," if the kingdom of God is not *within* him, he will seek for that which "cometh with observation."

The "upper room," with its simple, spiritual service, could have had no charm for unrenewed men, accustomed to the imposing Temple worship. To such minds, especially if superstitious, the Christian religion would seem to have no altar, no sacrifice, no incense, no priest, no temple; for the antitypes were things not seen, and the "substances" less visible than the "shadows." Only he who endures "as seeing Him who is invisible" can say, "We have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God;" "We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle."

The true enjoyment of public worship is not the sight of things which are seen, and which are temporal, but inward, personal fellowship

with the Divine Friend, who has promised "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Where communion with the Lord is realized, the heart is satisfied, more than satisfied, and cares not to say, "See what manner of stones, and what buildings are here!" Let the visitor be admitted to the palace when earthly royalty is absent, and the eye will wander with delight among the exhibitions of art. Let the monarch be in the Throne-room, and the subject will stand in his presence listening, whilst the beauties of the building are forgotten. When the Lord Jesus is felt to be present in the sanctuary—"the King in His beauty"—the material and perishable are as nothing; when He is absent, they are to the formal worshipper as everything. In the sanctuary we must have either Christ or an idol, but we cannot have both together. "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?"

Under the new dispensation, the dwelling of the Most High is not the material edifice, but the spiritual Church. Believers "are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Hence the "spiritual house" only is

the temple; and to apply the designation to any material sanctuary now is to miss the Divine idea. Nor is this all. We live under the dispensation of the Spirit. Every individual believer is a temple of the Holy Ghost, and the aggregate assembly of believers is the "holy temple in the Lord . . . a habitation of God through the Spirit."

If the Church, then, be the temple where the Holy Ghost is to abide, let the homage in all our churches ever be heard,—"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, *and* to the Holy Ghost." Any neglect of such homage will grieve the Spirit; the fire will cease to burn on the altar of the heart; the worship will be among the things "ready to die." The higher worship wanted is more "praying in the Holy Ghost;" more of holy men of God speaking as they are moved by the Holy Ghost; and not more Bezaleels and Aholiabs, "to work in all manner of workmanship" for outward adornment, and for mystic symbols.

How, then, can churches be "filled with the Spirit?" Whilst organization cannot give life, it may nevertheless impede or assist it. Hence our remarks on public prayer and other parts of service.

We would urge every Christian to see where the hindrance lies in himself, and where in the temptations of modern society. How many, instead of going from strength to strength, and making great advances every Sabbath-day, complain that during the week they lose nearly all the spiritual power they had gained, and that they come to the worship for revival. Some professing Christians seem to regard the sanctuary as a "house of merchandize" or a saloon of fashion, and instead of coming direct from their closets and contributing to the life of public worship, cause a chill. Is it not sometimes forgotten that worship is the homage not only of the lip, but also of the life, not only on the Sabbath, but on the week-day?

Many hindrances are felt by the pulpit as well as by the pew. In this fast age there is no time to rest, and even the Sabbatic calm is disturbed. It is true that the minister has not, like the man in trade, to contend with late hours on Saturday evening, but yet the many demands during the week upon his mind and body well-nigh exhaust him, and prevent that preparation, that perfect tranquillity for which he sighs.

What a testimony has been borne by devout men to the value of week-night services in aiding

our worship; and among these to the profit derived from Saturday evening devotion: thus bringing out a new meaning from an old Scripture—"That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew on." For all public worship, as we have already shown, there must be preparation by both minister and people. If a congregation would have such a leader of the worship as we have attempted to describe, he must be more the subject of their private devotions. In order to impart *to* them he must receive *from* them. Then, to borrow an illustration from Mr. Gladstone's work on Homer, the minister will manifest the power of "receiving from his audience in vapour what he pours back upon them in a flood."

CHAPTER XIII.

Jesus only.

Dr. Manning has recently proclaimed, with the authority of an oracle, that Protestantism is dead. Thank God, the worship in our churches proves that the oracle is false. Our reading of the Scriptures and our teaching still testify that we reject all tradition, and bow to "Jesus only" as the Great Prophet; our prayers still testify that "Jesus only" is "the great High Priest" to whom we look for absolution; our songs, full of loyalty, testify that "Jesus only" is our King, and that, like the early Christians, we "sing a hymn to Him as God." It is not Jesus and a vicar, but "Jesus only."

We allow no worshipping of angels, yet yield to none in our high appreciation of their presence, fellowship, and co-operation. Often have our churches "entertained angels unawares," and have had their help as fellow-servants, sent

forth with us to minister for the heirs of salvation. The subject is practical as well as sublime, and has a direct bearing upon our theme. The Scriptures remind us that they are spectators in our solemn assemblies, and that there should be nothing to offend them, but everything to invite their communion.

Our worship shall ever be after the pattern of things in the heavens; and with the "holy Church throughout all the world," we will bow before Him that sitteth on the throne, and worship "Him that liveth for ever and ever;" and will fall "down before the Lamb," saying with a loud voice—"WORTHY IS THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN."

PUBLIC WORSHIP.

Part II.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

On some Controverted Points.

A DISSERTATION on public worship would be incomplete without some reference to the subject of this chapter. It is introduced in the form of inquiries, to some of which the author confesses himself unable to return an answer; for on these, as on other controverted points, arguments may be adduced on opposite sides. The chapter must not, therefore, be viewed as expressing the opinions of the author.

"There are those," says the Rev. Thomas Binney, in his able Preface to Baird's *Chapter on Liturgies*, "who would be surprised to find

that Calvin not only approved of forms of prayer, but that he lamented the length to which some had gone in rejecting altogether certain ecclesiastical rites and customs;—that Knox prepared an Order for public worship, which was adopted and sanctioned by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland; and that his own last hours were soothed and solaced, and his soul refreshed by a prayer being read to him out of a book!—that some of the English Puritans and Separatists used the prepared Continental forms in their secret meetings; and that later Nonconformists had no objection to a Liturgy *as such*, but only wished some changes to be made in that which was in use,—that it should not be *exclusively* enforced, that there should be the means of giving variety to the services, and the opportunity afforded for free prayer."

1.

The following questions are sometimes raised:—First, whether in one church in every large town a revised liturgy should be used to meet the wishes of professors having a preference for

a form? Second, whether free prayer should be supplemented by a very short liturgy? Third, whether there should be, as Mr. Baird writes, "a *discretionary* ritual, not responsive, and supplied to the minister alone, for his guidance as to the matter and manner of worship, leaving freedom of variation as to the latter, or according to his judgment. Such was the usage of the Church of Scotland for the first century of her existence; such is the practice of every Reformed church on the Continent of Europe at the present time."

The Rev. W. Walford, late tutor in Homerton College, says: "A combination of both the modes of devotion" (of free prayer and a form) "would, I think, be productive of the best effects. The responsive form of the Litany is, in my apprehension, well adapted to maintain attention, by giving as well to the congregation as to the officiating minister an active part in the service." "I believe," says Dr. Cumming, "that the partial use of a form of prayer would be truly valuable."

The Rev. Ward Beecher represents an opposite opinion, shared by many, when he says:— "A mixed service, in part liturgical and in part extemporaneous, it is thought, would be service-

able in some single churches. We have no objection to the trial by any church that chooses to do it. But we are sure that the experiment will fail. Both of these elements, the moveable and the fixed, the voluntary and the presented, the extemporaneous and the formal, cannot co-exist. The one will kill the other."

A published selection of the choicest prayers, ancient as well as modern, would be a benefit to our churches. Why should not these treasures of devotion be accessible, as well as those of hymns and sermons? No prayer, however, requiring translation should be marred by being rendered into our language in an imperfect manner. Such a work, well executed, would be valuable in the closet and the study.

2.

Would it be well for the churches *occasionally* to unite in "the Apostles' creed"—a creed, not of doctrines, but of facts -- sublimest facts standing out by themselves in universal history, and having the profoundest spiritual significations—a creed of facts in which all Christians agree, and

which, therefore, would manifest unity of faith? Would the occasional use of this creed stimulate our own faith?

The complaint of many intelligent Christians is not that we have too much of the voice of the minister, but too little of the voices of the people —that too much is done *for* them, and too little *by* them. There is an excess of *listening* in our devotional services.

Can the want be supplied? From the quotation from Mr. Baird it is seen that some churches adopt a published form of prayer, which is *not* responsive;—the prayer is read by the minister, and the people assent in silence. Some churches, therefore, have read prayers without responses. Might not we have extemporary prayers with responses?

1.

Ministers would aid in increasing the efficiency of the service by encouraging the practice already existing, of the audible utterance of Amen at

the close of the prayer. Some support this suggestion by the words of the Apostle Paul to the Church at Corinth: "Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen, at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?" And these words, interpreted with the remembrance of the Jewish custom of response, favour the idea that Paul meant more than a silent mental assent. Others allude to the early Church, and quote the words of Justin Martyr: "The bishop makes a long prayer over the elements, and when he ends, all the people present give their approbation by saying Amen." And we think that this practice was not confined to any one religious service. Still, this is not our argument. We affirm that there is nothing artificial or conventional in the audible Amen at the close of the prayer, but only the free, ingenuous expression of strong religious feeling, which asks for an outlet, the heart speaking out of its abundance. Almost invariably in ministerial prayer-meetings, the prayer, if earnest and appropriate, is followed by an Amen, in a subdued, devout tone. It is because there is no unnatural restraint imposed.

Some ministers, although having the consent of the churches, fail to secure an audible response. To succeed, ministers must never add a response to their own prayers;—they should observe a pause before and after the Amen, and should inform the people *when* to repeat it, by avoiding an abrupt conclusion, and finishing with some simple, brief formula, as "Through Jesus Christ our Lord;" or, "Grant this, O Lord, for the honour of our Advocate and Mediator;" or, "Through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with Thee and the Holy Ghost be all honour and glory, world without end."

Many pious persons are mute only from timidity. Let a number of hearers, therefore, anxious for the response, break silence, and the timid will soon follow.

The reader is respectfully asked to remember the author's reference to the structure of public prayer, and the pauses between the sentences and paragraphs for the people to send up to God the silent Amen. In extemporary prayer this is all that a congregation can do, as obviously they cannot repeat the words of the supplication.

The Amen, both silent and audible, will have

a healthy influence on the people; it will keep up the attention of the worshippers, and make them feel that they are praying *with* their minister. When audible, it will also exert a power for good on the minister's own mind. When he hears but few responses, he will be prompted to inquire before God whether the muteness was owing to anything wrong in the matter, manner, structure, or spirit of his prayer; but if he hears the hearty Amen of his people, he will be encouraged. Nothing would sooner put an end to frosty, didactic, fine prayers; for the minister would be reminded by an ominous silence that the devout of his congregation could not join in his supplications.

The fear of such a plan leading to formalism would be prevented by the minister not *urging* any of the congregation to respond, but simply saying that all were at liberty to do so, if their hearts prompted them; he might then try, by the aid of the Truth and of the Spirit, to quicken those pious feelings that should lead to spontaneous utterance. Observation proves that *voluntary* responses are generally from the lips of the devout, and that worldly hearers do not care to

respond, except they feel that they are almost obliged to do so.

2.

Might a very short prayer—an ejaculation—before or after the reading of the Scriptures be offered aloud by the people? How appropriate would be one of the following petitions:—"Oh, that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes." "Oh, let me not wander from Thy commandments." "Blessed art Thou, O God; teach me Thy statutes." "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." "I am a stranger in the earth; hide not Thy commandments from me."

3.

It has been thought by many that the custom of alternate reading might enliven the worship, and keep up the attention, especially of the youth. We think, however, the system of always reading single verses in turn destroys the sense. *Some* of the Psalms, properly arranged, are most

adapted for alternate reading of passages, though not always of verses. Take, for instance, the hundred and seventh Psalm, in which the congregation might audibly unite in the chorus, "Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men: for," &c.

4.

The Rev. Professor Green, of the Baptist College, Rawdon, in a valuable paper, says: "Would it be impossible for the congregation to take some audible part in public prayer? We speak with diffidence here, knowing how often the suggestion has been made, and how invariably the attempt to follow it has failed. *Yet, we would ask, might not the Lord's Prayer at least be offered by the responsive voices of the whole congregation?* If, indeed, we believed that this prayer was, as some have alleged, no better than a Jewish formulary, provisionally adopted by our Lord until He taught His disciples something better, we might acquiesce in its general disuse; but if, as we believe, it is the model and summary, if not the form, of all true prayer, there would seem to be a special fitness

in its solemn, stated repetition by the whole congregation."

Any proposed improvement in our modes of worship is likely to meet with opposition. This, however, is not an unmixed evil, as it ensures greater deliberation and maturity of plan. All that can be expected, is that the suggested alteration be examined without prejudice, and, if found conducive to the real simplicity and spirituality of worship, that it be favourably received. The biographer of the Rev. Dr. Raffles writes:— "His manner of conducting Divine service was admirable. He liked to see everything done 'decently and in order;' and in the absence of a liturgy, much undoubtedly depends upon the good taste and discretion of the minister. He adhered, however, to the usual simple mode, common to the churches of the Congregational order, and was with difficulty brought to make any alteration. Only in the latter years of his ministry did he acquiesce in the suggestion made to him to divide the long prayer before the sermon—an inheritance from our Puritan forefathers—but having once made the change, now generally adopted in Nonconformist places of worship, with great advantage to the hearers, he acknowledged that it was an improvement." It is not

often that an old man is willing to reconsider a subject, to surrender a long-cherished theory, and to adopt, and even recommend, a suggestion which he had often opposed. The above example is, therefore, worthy of record.

CHAPTER II.

Primitive and Modern Worship.

The question often asked, if our public worship closely resembles that of the primitive churches, is sometimes raised in forgetfulness of the altered state of society. A closer resemblance, probably, would be found in our missionary churches. Moreover, we have no reason to think that all the earliest fellowships adopted precisely the same modes of worship, although they held the same truth. Principles rather than rules are laid down in the New Testament.

The following questions are raised in the present day, and demand thoughtful attention. 1. Whether the devotional service should be separated from the teaching? 2. Whether there should be services on the Sabbath for believers only? 3. Whether the "breaking of bread" should be every first day of the week? 4. Whether there should be a more marked dis-

tinction between the morning and the evening service: the latter being more for teaching? 5. Whether plurality of helpers, including suitable laymen, should not be encouraged? 6. Whether there should be more intercommunity of the churches in districts—especially at the Lord's Table, such gatherings to consist sometimes of churches of the same order, and at other times to include Christians of different names? Thus should we teach those who are striving to secure outward uniformity by suppressing independent thought and action, that spiritual unity is something very different and far more sublime.

Allusion has been made to the sensuous service of those who multiply rites and ceremonies, and unconsciously put the signs in the place of the things signified, who exalt them in the temple as God, and make a worship of the worship. Is there no danger, however, in an opposite direction from a class of professors who, under the plea of spiritual worship, seem to make light of all outward forms? Whilst many of them may be exemplary in their character, what, it may be asked, is the tendency of their system? Ecclesiastical history testifies that their system tends to a quietism which interferes with religious activity, and when the first ardour

is cooled down, leads to indifference. Some men who clamour against the religious observance of the first day of the week, on the ground that every day should be a Sabbath, are not always the good people that set the example of piety in the week day. It is usually found that those who speak of ordinances as if they were "beggarly elements of the world," do not, by their neglect of them, live nearer to God. The study of man's nature tells us that the worship suited to him must have some outward form, however simple, as well as an inward spiritual life.

The temptation of many inquirers is to suppose there is no danger of error in their own religious circles; whereas, it may be found that in all denominations there are "graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them."

CHAPTER III.

How to Conduct Prayer-Meetings.

The place where prayer is wont to be made will have a sacred charm only when the "Spirit of grace and supplication" is poured out upon the assembly. Then the people will feel that they are in the presence of God, and that they are "true worshippers."

The manifestation of the Spirit may be much hindered, not only by worldly tempers and unsuitable prayers, but also by any misimprovement of celestial gales. The prayer-meetings which are only outward forms may seem all alike, but when the Spirit of life and supplication is poured out, each gathering will have some peculiarity of its own, and different impressions will be produced. There will not be the temperature of zero, nor the treacherous calm at sea, but a revival in its highest meaning.

We like the devotional service in which "the wind bloweth." Let our churches cry, "Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south, and blow upon my garden, that the spices may flow out:" and the complaints of small gatherings and poor gifts will cease to be made; all will seek, during the heat and burden of the day, such a refreshing breeze, and will say one to another, "Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord."

The choice of a leader should not be left to casualties or postponed to the time of meeting. Supposing the person, unexpectedly asked, to be a man of devotional spirit, discriminating, approachable—one, the very first glance of whose eyes gains sympathy—yet even he may feel unprepared. He may possibly have hurried from business with a heart burdened and distracted with the worries of the day, and in vain he struggles to throw his whole mind into the service—to have deep feeling, and to express it. The leader needs to come from private devotion, in which he has "engaged his heart to approach" before God, and his lips have been touched with "a live coal," so that he can speak.

Observation and wisdom should be shown in the selection of suitable persons to pray, and in

determining the order of succession (not always by seniority), and in taking care that such as are of uncertain gift be never, if possible, entrusted with the closing prayer. Although the hymns may have been pre-arranged, it may be deemed wise to make alterations to meet the varying mental states of the meeting. The leader will pray last, or at any other time as he may judge best. The life of a prayer-meeting is aided by many short pregnant prayers by persons of different gifts, and by suitable hymns, the selection of tunes for which should not be left to anyone that may rise first.

Occasionally, topics for prayer may be suggested, which may be announced beforehand, that the friends may be better prepared. It might be well for the choice not to be left to any one person, but for the "two or three" to "agree" in the selection.

Friends wishing any special mention of their wants before the Lord, should be affectionately encouraged; in some cases additional sympathy would be felt by the disclosure of the name.

No one should be asked to pray without his willingness being first ascertained, and this rule should be known, that no timid person be kept from the prayer-meeting. *Those who pray should*

be called upon before the hymn is announced, that a few minutes may be given to arrange their thoughts. Sometimes the president may mention no name, but request anyone to pray who may be prompted by God's Spirit. A private list of all the members, irrespective of rank in society, that can pray would be useful to the pastor, but the plan of having a public list, and all praying in turn, is open to many objections. Prayer-meetings do not always need addresses: only occasionally they are necessary; and the people are willing to release their young minister from this department of work and to accept instead his prayer at the close.

Can nothing be done by our churches to stir up the gift of prayer and employ it? Is there nothing suggestive in the words, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples?" The male members of a country church were invited by their pastor to meet for friendly conversation on the faults detected in prayer-meetings; all felt profited, and asked for a second conference. At such meetings, faults like those already alluded to might be pointed out, also many others—such as odd phrases, misquotations; inaudibleness, owing to the face being towards the wall, or covered with the

hand; anyone lengthening his prayer, as if he would leave nothing for others to say. (See page 36.)

Were a suitable training adopted by the pastor, how many pious young men would soon aid in our devotional meetings, and acceptably conduct family worship in their own households! The fear felt by some older Christians of putting young men forward is groundless, if a good example be set before them.

THE MISSIONARY PRAYER MEETING

would be rendered more edifying by a short address containing facts related with all the vivacity of an eye-witness. The prayers might be improved by those who pray being asked beforehand, and selecting some field of mission, the study of which had enriched their own minds, and warmed their own hearts. The occasional visit of a returned missionary would be particularly welcomed. Churches might keep up a correspondence with missionaries, and read letters sent by them; and missionaries, in order to economize time and labour, might address a letter to one church, with the postscript, "When

this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church at, &c."

Similar remarks may be made in reference to prayers for HOME MISSIONS.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHERS'

Prayer Meeting cannot be too strongly recommended. Rightly conducted, they would lead the teachers to feel their solemn responsibility to fulfil their ministry, and that their sufficiency was of God; schisms would be prevented, and harmony promoted.

Earnest believing prayer should be offered for the immediate surrender of the youthful heart to Jesus, and for the varied interests of the children, as well as those of their parents. Teachers should pray one for another most affectionately, and thus bear each other's burdens. The superintendent's anxieties can only be fully understood by himself. The anxiety he feels during the annual excursion of the children, that all may enjoy themselves and return home without accident, may serve as an illustration of his felt responsibility. If 500 children return home safe, and but one be missing, will he not at

once go after that which is lost? Will he excuse himself, saying, "It is not my child," or, "Am I the child's keeper?" But each child is a soul, and his prayer is, in common with all pious teachers, that in heaven not one of these children shall be missing. Well may the superintendent then say, "Pray for us." The mutual prayers of superintendent and teachers will be the best bond of union. Where there is a superintendent of the girls' school, both superintendents should be remembered.

The comfort of a prayer-meeting will often depend on adopting the right place, and the right hour, the latter of which is not when the mind and body are wearied.

The teachers' prayer-meeting should supply an opportunity for young beginners exercising the gift of prayer, and, for the sake of their future usefulness, great forbearance should be shown. The superintendent in this, as in other respects, may be a fellow-helper of the minister and church.

For other suggestions for the improvement of prayer-meetings, the reader is requested to see pages 21 and 36.

A Female Prayer-meeting,

led by some suitable person, is a great blessing to a church. Among the many advantages, we may notice that of training up praying mothers; preparing the way for devotional meetings of female Sunday-school teachers; qualifying a band of visitors to inquirers and the sick; and the association of the female members of the church for edification and usefulness. The Evangelical Alliance might increase its efficiency by including in its annual devotional services one large female prayer-meeting.

We conclude this chapter with the following remarks of the Rev. Ward Beecher:—

"Every new voice you can get out in the prayer-meeting is a new power in the church. One great mistake in prayer-meetings is that the room is too large. A small meeting for prayer may be as interesting as a large; but the people must sit together. Scattering has the most chilling effect possible. There is something in contiguity—call it magnetism, or what you will—that makes a meeting in a well-filled room, however small, earnest and lively,

whilst a meeting of the same number scattering over a large room would be quite lifeless. Another mistake is that most meetings are, like most prayers, too long. With reference to his own prayer-meeting, which numbered about 1,100, he had begun with as small prayer-meetings as anybody, but had worked steadily up to the top; and his present numbers were the result of twenty-one years' labour. He felt himself bound to make more preparation for the prayer-meeting than even for the pulpit. If you carry your prayer-meeting in your heart all the week, it will become the very marrow of your church services."

CHAPTER IV.

How to Conduct Family Worship.

Much of the indifference, if not aversion, to family devotion in some households may arise from the undue length of the service, the tediousness of the leader, the unsuitable time chosen for it, or some disagreement in the circle.

The importance of family worship is so great, that it should be the study of the head of the household to make it as interesting and profitable as possible. When rightly conducted, children do not feel tired of it, and in after life own what a safeguard it has been. Servants also have been thankful for having had "believing masters," and for the interest expressed in these happy seasons for their spiritual welfare. Nowhere should prayer be sweeter than in the domestic sanctuary.

Tillotson, speaking of setting up the constant worship of God in our families, "by daily prayers to God every morning and evening, and

by reading some portion of the Holy Scriptures, at those times especially, out of the Psalms of David and the New Testament," adds: "And this is so necessary to keep alive and to maintain a sense of God and religion in the minds of men, that where it is neglected, I do not see how any family can in reason be esteemed a family of Christians, or, indeed, to have any religion at all."

The arrangement of this service may be varied by passing events, and the character of the household; but the following suggestions will probably meet with approval:—

1. The selection of Scripture reading should not be left to the last moment, but be pre-arranged. This would secure the selection of the most suitable portions, and prevent the reader stumbling on verses which, owing to the translation, are not fit to be read aloud.

Some families read the Bible through, selecting the Old Testament for one part of the day, and the New for the other. Probably a series of readings, especially adapted to the family, would occasionally be a great benefit. (See page 76.)

Uninspired books, containing reflections upon the chapter read, might be used; but they must be very brief and pithy. Who has not heard of "Doddridge's Family Expositor?" Often the

head of a family is capable of making *short* and happy comments.

2. Let all the household, including the servants, have their Bibles, and let each in turn read a verse. This plan is deemed better than all reading simultaneously.

3. Encourage each member every morning to read or repeat a text, leaving the selection to himself. On the Monday morning the texts of the sermons might be repeated by the children.

4. Some families enliven the service with a hymn, sung or read; it is a proper recognition of the duty of praise, and gives a happy familiarity with the hymn-book. (See page 125.)

5. Where the father or the mother, or any other leader of the household, cannot offer extemporary prayer, let the best selection of printed family prayers be procured, and let these first be read in private, that the heart may better *pray* the prayer. Intelligent persons accustomed to read a form are recommended occasionally to write out a prayer of their own composition, which will have a freshness, speciality, and adaptation.

6. The difficulty felt at first in praying extempore will soon be overcome. Some have begun with the book; then have altered parts as they proceeded; then have stored their mind

with the leading petitions of the prayers, relying on themselves for words. (See page 28.)

Aids to extemporary prayer are found in the works of Isaac Watts and Matthew Henry. Both authors arrange prayer under the different divisions of adoration, confession, petition, and thanksgiving; and Matthew Henry, under each of these divisions, has a choice selection of Scripture passages, which, when fixed in the memory, give confidence to the suppliant and richness to his prayer. The Rev. Thomas Scott, when first praying in the family, used a form, but gradually discontinued it.

7. It is the custom of some families audibly to repeat the Lord's Prayer, and sweet is this family prayer which begins, "Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name."

8. Many distractions in family prayer might be prevented by wise pre-arrangements. Toys, pictures, and like objects of amusement remaining on the table, or the meal just spread, all remaining uncovered, will often prove a temptation through the inlet of a child's eyes, if not those of others. Some families escape these distractions by removing to another room.

9. It is a day in which the duty of family worship must be enforced, for Romanism breaks

up social ties, and would substitute her matins and vespers in the church for prayer in the family.

The example of the commentator just alluded to is worthy of the imitation, not only of ministers, but of all heads of families. Referring to his exchanging the form for extemporary prayer, he says: "From this beginning I do not know that, during thirty-eight years, the daily worship of God in my family, morning and evening, has ever been interrupted, except when I was ill or from home; and, indeed, when that has been the case, some one of my household has usually supplied my place. On this I look back with peculiar gratitude, as one grand means of my uncommon measure of domestic comfort, and of bringing down on my children the blessings which God has graciously bestowed upon them. And though the time allotted to this service has been for many years far longer than is generally deemed sufficient or expedient, yet by a punctual observance of an appointed hour, and the adjustment of domestic affairs to the plan as known and invariable, no inconvenience worthy of notice has resulted from it. Nor have I, as many complain, in excuse for great brevity, found my domestics in general

show symptoms of weariness and inattention. My evening worship is much shorter than that of the morning; and for many years past it has taken place in all ordinary cases at a pretty early hour, which, when it can be practised, appears to be much preferable. In numerous instances I have had visitants, especially relatives, to whom I clearly perceived that my family worship was disagreeable, and some who would not, so much as by a change of posture, profess to join in our prayers; but I never once omitted the service or altered the method of it on that account; and in some cases the parties have been softened into a more cordial concurrence with us." Referring to his attractive manner of conducting family worship, the biographer says, "that in very few instances has a servant or a young person, or indeed any person, passed any length of time under his roof without appearing to be brought permanently under the influence of religious principles."

It is to be feared that in many of our cottages few opportunities are afforded for strictly private prayer, and hence the great importance of encouraging the family gathering for devotion. How sweet is the cottage prayer-meeting many can attest; and surely not less so the cottar's

family worship, whether on Sunday night or at any other time.

"The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha' Bible, ance his father's pride.
His bonnet reverently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care;
And 'Let us worship God,' he says, with solemn air

"Then kneeling down to HEAVEN'S ETERNAL KING,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope springs exulting on triumphant wing,
That thus they all should meet in future days;
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

"Compared with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method, and of art,
When men display to congregations wide,
Devotion's every grace, except the heart!
The Power, incensed, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well pleased, the language of the soul;
And in His Book of Life the inmates poor enrol."

Conclusion.

In the foregoing pages the subject of Public Worship has been considered in minute detail. If we would secure the desired result of the whole, we must carefully study the parts, as reason and experience teach us. It is so in works of art. A writer giving counsel to a student of the Fine Arts, forcibly says :—" The rapid and powerful artist necessarily looks with such contempt on those who seek minutiæ of detail *rather* than grandeur of impression, that it is almost impossible for him to conceive of the great last step in art, by which both become compatible. He has so often to dash the delicacy out of the pupil's work, and to blot the details from his encumbered canvas ; so frequently to lament the loss of breadth and unity, and so seldom to reprehend the imperfection of minutiæ, that he necessarily looks upon complete *parts* as the very sign

of error, weakness, and ignorance. Thus frequently to the latest period of his life, he separates, as chief enemies, the details and the whole, which, unless he reconciles, an artist cannot be great; and because details alone, and unreferred to a final purpose, are the sign of a tyro's work, he loses sight of the remoter truth, that details perfect in unity, and contributing to a final purpose, are the sign of the production of a consummate master." If, then, we would secure a higher type of Public Worship—one that shall leave no chord of the heart untouched—let our study of the subject be most minute as well as most comprehensive.

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